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# POCKET NOVELS



## The Mountaineer. 228





THE JOURNAL

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE



# THE MOUNTAINEER:

OR,

## LOST IN THE DEPTHS.

A TALE OF AN UNEXPLORED REGION.

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BY EDWARD WILLETT,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING POCKET NOVELS:

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BY EDWARD WILBETT.



# THE MOUNTAINEER.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A HALF-MILE FALL.

"Hi-yo-o-o!"

A faint cry came upward from the tremendous abyss, on the edge of which three men were standing, holding the end of a lariat, or rawhide rope. A faint cry, reaching up out of the depths—a cry in which a tone of anxiety could be detected, but in which there was no tremulousness, no sign of fear.

"What do you want, Fred?" shouted Ben March, throwing his strong voice down the precipice as well as he could.

"Ha-u-l up!"

The three men commenced to pull up the slender but stout rope, tugging and straining as if there was something weighty at the end of it; but they soon stopped suddenly, and their countenances were full of consternation and dread as they looked at each other.

"What is the matter?" asked Professor Belzoni, whose position had not caused him to feel the full strain of the line.

"Don't you know?" replied Ben March, whose broad forehead was thickly covered with a perspiration that was not induced by the heat or by his labor.

"I am afraid—"

"That the rope is breaking? You are right. I heard one of the strands snap, with a noise like the cracking of a whip-lash. You must have heard it."

"I did hear it, but I hoped it might be something else."

"It was nothing else. I am afraid it was the crack of doom to poor Fred."

No voice of entreaty, no cry of fear, came up from the abyss, but the great gulf was as silent as death, except when the wind fitfully stirred the trees, or the scream of a bird arose from the depths. The man at the lower end of the rope probably knew his situation as well, and realized it as fully, as those who were



holding the line above. He knew that nothing he could say would stimulate them to greater exertions, and that no effort of his own could better his condition. He knew that his life hung upon a hair, almost, and he awaited the result in silence, if not with resignation.

"What is to be done now?" inquired the Professor, the moisture of whose eyes was visible through the glasses of his gold-rimmed spectacles.

"I wish you could tell us," replied Ben March. "Suppose we throw down another rope to him."

"You kain't do that boss," said Jim Warmack. "Four riatas are tied together in this hyar rope, and thar's only three more."

"No more? Are there none around the mules' necks? Perhaps we might use the pack-ropes."

"Narry nuther, as I told you. The pack-ropes are nearly worn out, and wouldn't hold nuthin'."

"This lariat is half up," suggested the Professor. "Suppose we haul it in, and then we will have enough for another rope. Perhaps the broken strand is in this one, Ben."

"No; it is further down. I could tell, from the sound, that it is not far above Fred. He knows it as well as we do, poor fellow, and that is the cause of his silence. If we could do any thing to help him, he would tell us of it."

"But we may be able to haul up this end. I believe it is our only hope. Can you think of any thing else that we might do, Warmack?"

The mountaineer mournfully shook his head.

"You are right, Professor," said Ben March, and his face grew dark, and his lips were firmly compressed. "We have no other chance, and this is a very slight one. Take hold with us, and let us haul slowly and as easily as we can. Unless God helps us, our efforts will be of no avail."

The three men again tugged at the rawhide rope, hauling it in as gently as they could. They worked in silence, their countenances expressive of their intense anxiety, not permitting even the sound of their breathing to be heard.

They had hauled in nearly ten feet of the rope, and their eyes had begun to brighten with hope, and the muscles of their faces had relaxed a little—when again it snapped, with a



sharp sound like the cracking of a whip, and the three men fell back upon the stony ground.

The rope had broken, and the living weight at the end of it was gone—gone flying down the side of that terrible precipice, which reached sheer three thousand feet to the bed of the Colorado!

Ben March was the first who rose to his feet, and he stood, for a few moments, bent over the edge of the fearful chasm, his eyes almost starting from their sockets, and his fine features convulsed by unutterable anguish.

Then his tall form swayed to one side and the other, and he would have fallen forward over the precipice, if he had not been seized by the strong arms of the mountaineer, who drew him back, and laid him on the ground in a fainting-fit.

Professor Belzoni opened the young man's vest, and commenced to apply such restoratives as were at hand.

While he is thus engaged, we will inform the reader who and what these men were.

Benjamin and Frederick March—known among their friends as Ben and Fred—were natives of New York, who, at the death of their father, had fallen heirs to a fine property. Relieved of the necessity of depending upon their own exertions for support, and tired of the pleasures of the metropolis, which had become to them "stale, flat and unprofitable," they had resolved to make an extensive tour through the wilderness of the Great West, where they hoped to be more than compensated, by the wonders of nature, and the excitement and perils of the hunter's life, for the gay scenes which they left.

In the course of their wanderings, they stopped at Guaymas, a Mexican port on the Pacific, where they fell in with Professor Belzoni, a friend of their family, who was about to start on a scientific tour through Sonora, Arizona and California, accompanied by Jim Warmack, an experienced mountain hunter and guide.

The brothers had gladly joined the Professor, and they had thus far found the journey a comparatively safe and very pleasant one.

Ben March was as splendid and noble a specimen of manhood as either the city or the wilderness could produce. In



form he was tall and strong, and his fine and open countenance well expressed the nobility of his soul. His masses of curling chestnut hair, his heavy, tawny beard, and his brown eyes, which shone with an amber glow when he was excited, gave him the appearance of a young lion.

Nearly thirty years of age, he considered himself the special guardian and protector of his brother Fred, who was not yet twenty-two, and who was considerably below Ben in size and bodily strength. What Fred lacked in these qualities, however, he made up in suppleness and agility, and he was by no means deficient in courage and enterprise. His slight figure, and his handsome and almost beardless face, gave him an effeminate appearance; but Jim Warmack always declared that Fred had "a powerful heap of hold-out in him." As Fred had been the darling of the family at home, so he was the particular pet of Ben when they were in the wilderness, and the latter cared for him as if he had been a child.

Professor Belzoni was a middle-aged French-Italian, with dark hair and eyes, and of good size and form. His life was devoted to science, but he was a good companion and a faithful friend. He always wore spectacles, which seemed to improve his appearance, and he would have been quite a good-looking man, if it had not been for a strong tendency to baldness on the top of his head.

Jim Warmack was a big, strong, rawboned, leather-skinned wilderness man, who had passed his life in the mountains and on the plains, and who was perfectly at home in every place that any white man had visited. His indifference to danger was only equaled by his love of strong drink, and his shrewdness and skill in his peculiar line could only be excelled by the eagerness with which he plunged into the fascinating game of monté, whenever he could reach a settlement or a trapper's rendezvous. When removed from such temptations, he was a reliable man and a first-class mountaineer.

During several days they had been traveling slowly along the edge of the great cañon of the Colorado, that tremendous gorge by which the great river forces its way through the mountains, between precipitous escarpments upward of five thousand feet high. Indeed, it has been stated that there are points at which the walls are two or three miles in sight.



This stupendous physical prodigy, reaching for near two hundred miles from near the junction of Grand and Green rivers, had wonderful attractions for the travelers, and their interest was increased by the fact, as declared to them, that no white man had ever explored it or penetrated its depths.

With feelings of intense curiosity, mingled with awe, they had pursued their way along the brink of the immense chasm, vainly endeavoring to find a place at which they might attempt a passage down to the river, which looked, in the vast distance below, as if a man might jump across it, although it was supposed to be, in reality, more than a mile in breadth.

They knew that, if they could search the bottom of the great cañon, its wonders would be found to far surpass any thing that they had previously seen, and their excited imaginations heightened their expectations, until they felt that they would be willing to give up every other pleasure and hope, if they might be the first explorers of the wonderful defile. But all their attempts had failed, and all their search for a practicable passage had met with disappointment.

At last they had reached a point at which, as Professor Belzoni estimated, the wall of the cañon was not much more than half a mile high, and there they had halted and encamped, for the purpose of a closer examination.

On looking over the edge of the cliff, the Professor had seen what he believed to be a rare plant, growing out from the rock at the side, and Ben March had noticed a ledge, at a considerable distance below, from which, if it could be reached, an excellent view might be had, and a way of further descent might be opened.

Instantly all were excited by a desire to visit the ledge, and Fred March, even more than the others, was clamorous to be let down by a rope, as he was a light weight, promising to bring up the Professor's plant, and to give a full description of all the beauties and wonders that he should see.

His brother endeavored to dissuade him from the undertaking, and even flatly forbade it at first; but, as it had been agreed that some one should make the attempt, and as he was by far the lightest of the party, he insisted upon it, and so strongly urged the point, that he was at last permitted to go, Ben yielding his consent with much reluctance and many



misgivings. The result of the perilous voyage has already been related.

When Ben March recovered his senses, he opened his eyes and looked around a moment, and then, realizing the terrible event that had just happened, he covered his face with his hands, and his grief found vent in a flood of tears.

"Did you hear any thing, Professor," he asked, again raising his head, "when—when—the rope broke?"

"I heard the cracking of the strand, and I thought there was a noise like the rushing of some large bird; but I was so stunned by what had happened that I can not be sure."

"A vulture, perhaps? Don't say that, Professor! It is too horrible to think that those creatures should be making a feast on my poor Freddy. I suppose they must have been hovering over him while he hung there, expecting every moment to fall from that fearful height."

The strong man shuddered convulsively, and again buried his face in his hands.

"Take a sup of this brandy, Ben," said the Professor. "You need something to strengthen you, just now."

"What a tale I shall have to carry home!" said Ben, when he was so far recovered as to be able to sit up. "What a tale to send there, rather, for I shall never be able to tell it to Fanny. What a horrible death for my poor Freddy—to be dashed to pieces on the rocks, after such a terrible fall!"

"You may make yourself easy on that point, although it is poor consolation that I have to offer you. The breath was out of his body long before he reached the bottom, and it is probable that he had little sensation, if any, after the rope broke."

"Do you believe that? I hope it is true. But to think of his feelings, as he was suspended over that awful abyss, knowing that the rope by which he was hanging was stranded, and that at any moment it might part and let him down into the depth. Every moment must have been a living death to him, and that was the horror of it, Professor."

"It used to seem horrible to us to read of Prometheus chained to the rock, with the vulture gnawing at his vitals, and I think I can form some idea of his sufferings; but—"

"But thar's entirely too much jaw h'yar, now that the



thing is over and done with," interrupted Warmack, who had a true mountaineer's indifference to scenes of death, and thought the subject had been sufficiently discussed. "The poor boy is gone, and we are all sorry enough fur it; but he kain't be brought back, and all this talk ain't doin' nothin'. 'Thar ain't no use in rakin' up old sores, and talkin' about vultur's and meat-houses."

"He was not your brother, and you did not love him as I did," said Ben.

"P'raps not, though I had tuk a powerful likin' to the boy, and would hev fit fur him as long as my bones would hev held together; but I ain't a man to cry over what kain't be helped. I am mighty glad that no bloody red-skins hev raised his ha'r, and I reckon it ain't entirely onpossible that he may be livin' yet."

"What do you say? Do you think there is any hope, even the slightest, that Fred may not have been killed by that fall?"

"'Thar's allers *some* sort of hope, 'cordin' to my way of thinkin', when you don't see the man dead afore you. I've knowed mountain men to come safe out of sech hard old scrapes, and I hev come safe out of so many myself, that 'thar's sca'cely no sort of a thing that seems onpossible to me. 'Thar's allers chances, in the wust kind of a scrape."

"There is a chance," exclaimed Ben, starting to his feet. "It is the faintest glimmer of a chance, a chance slighter than the thread of a spider's web; but it is *not impossible* that Freddy may yet be alive, and that is enough for me."

He walked to the edge of the bluff, gazed long and intently down into the chasm, and then drew up the remnant of the rope, and examined the broken end carefully.

"I have resolved upon what I shall do, Professor," he said, as he returned to his companions. "It may be true that no white men have ever traversed that cañon, but I have no doubt that men have been in it, and what men have done, men can do."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Belzoni.

"I mean that I intend to penetrate that gorge; that I shall not leave this country until I have reached the bottom of it; that I will search for Freddy while my life lasts; that I will



find him, alive or dead, or will lay my bones in the same abyss."

"Good for you, old hoss!" exclaimed the mountaineer, grasping the young man's hand, and giving it a hearty squeeze. "You may jest count Jim Warmack in fur that work, as long as you want to stick to it."

"And I must tell the sad story to Fanny," said the Professor, looking up mournfully at Ben.

"I suppose so. I would not expect or wish you to assist in such a search as that which I mean to make. You will soon leave this region, I presume, and when you return to New York you must be our news-bearer."

"Let us mark this place, and git back to camp," said Jim Warmack.

"It is needless to mark it. I will never forget it."

Ben March carefully coiled up the broken lariat, and led the way back to camp, where they found his Mexican servant, who had been left to watch the animals, sleeping soundly by the packs.

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## CHAPTER II.

### AFTER THE PARTY.

IN a splendid mansion in New York, in the depth of winter, a numerous and brilliant company was assembled.

The occasion was a soirée, given by Mrs. March, the step-mother of Ben and Fred March, and the widow of their father.

She had married her husband while she was yet young, and he had soon been taken from her; consequently, she was not disposed to forego the pleasures and gratifications of society. She was the owner, also, of a handsome property, and had been left in possession of the fine house which had been her husband's. Such advantages, she thought, should not be buried, or hid under a bushel, especially when she was so well calculated to display and adorn them.

She had thrown open her house, therefore, and had given



this magnificent party, contrary to the wishes of Fanny March, the sister of Ben and Fred, who was not willing to put on the appearance of gayety, as it was not long since she had heard of the horrible death of her brother Fred, far away in the wilderness of the south-west.

The parlors of Mrs. March were crowded with the representatives of wealth and intelligence and fashion and beauty; but the most admired object in the throng, and that which attracted the greatest attention and homage, was beautiful Fanny March, who shone like a star wherever she went, and who was at the same time the pride and the envy of her stepmother.

Although not yet twenty years of age, Fanny March was a woman in thought and action, as well as in growth. She had dark hair, large, thoughtful eyes, and a complexion as pure as alabaster. She was a little above the average height of women, but her figure was perfect, and was set off to great advantage by her mourning dress, which Mrs. March had not been able to induce her to lay aside for the occasion. All her movements, as well as the expression of her countenance, showed that she possessed a strong will, a daring spirit, an unusual energy, and an invincible resolution, as well as an intelligent mind and a true and loving heart.

The observed of all observers, and the center of attraction, she moved like a queen among the glittering throng, receiving the incense of her numerous worshipers as if she was entitled to it, but it was of no value to her; as if she was among them but not of them; as if her body was there, but her thoughts were far away from those splendid parlors. She had a stereotyped smile and a word of welcome for all, but her eyes never shone with their own light, except when they happened to fall upon a dark-featured, foreign-looking man of middle age, whose gold-rimmed spectacles and absent air appeared strangely out of place in that gay assemblage. Whenever Fanny's glance met his, her smile was more than usually gracious, and his cold features instantly warmed into life.

Although the dark little gentleman with spectacles and absent air seemed out of his place among the guests of Mrs. March, he was by no means unnoticed, but was one of the



lions of the party ; for he had made himself an enviable reputation in the scientific world, and it was not a great while since he had returned from a tour through the north-western States of Mexico, which were then comparatively an unknown region. Not only had he made many valuable scientific explorations and discoveries, but he had seen many wonderful works of nature, and had encountered many strange and startling adventures, which he well knew how to describe and relate.

He was much sought after, therefore, even among the fashionables of New York, and on this occasion was honored and listened to by the best and the worthiest. Before long he was hemmed in at a corner, where he took a seat, and was surrounded by a crowd of attentive auditors.

Fanny March often looked wistfully toward the corner where the knot of listeners had collected around him, as if she would fain leave the flatterers and vapid bores by whom she was surrounded, to hear his stories of life in the western wilds ; but it is probable that she would have been less eager to listen, if she had known that he was relating, in subdued but thrilling tones, to those who stood around with bated breath, the fearful story of the perilous enterprise which ended in the terrible death of Fred March.

She had an opportunity of speaking to him as she passed by him in going down to supper.

" I want to see you and talk with you when this is over," she whispered.

All things must have an end in time, and so there was an end of Mrs. March's soirée. The end came at a late hour, or, rather, at an early hour in the morning ; but better late than never, thought Fanny, as a sigh expressed her weariness and disgust.

The last guest had been bowed out by her stately step-mother, the last farewell words had been spoken, the tired lips had been forced into their last smile, and the gas-lights were turned down in the brilliant parlors ; but Fanny still lingered there, although her mother had sought her own apartments.

She had not lingered alone, for another had waited there and he soon approached and greeted her.



"So you have remained, Belzoni," she said, in a glad tone, as she advanced and gave him her hand.

"Undoubtedly. Did you not command me?"

"I asked you to stay, and I am glad that you complied with my request."

"Your wishes are my commands, and it gives me pleasure to execute them. What further commands has the fair queen of night to lay upon her devoted slave? In plain words, what do you want with me, Miss Fanny?"

"I said that I wished to see you and talk with you."

"Shall I turn up the gas, that you may see me better?—or shall I lend you my glasses?"

"I am not in the humor for raillery, Professor. Those people have spoiled me, and made me fretful. I can see you well enough without more light, and without the aid of your glasses."

"You wish to talk, then?"

"I do."

"But how? I must be careful what I talk about with you."

"I will tell you what to talk about. Sit down by me, and tell me more about Mexico."

"About Mexico?"

"Yes; and about California, and those countries in which you have traveled."

"But it is late, Miss Fanny, and you must be tired."

"I am not too tired to listen to what I wish to know. Is it a long journey to go there? What route do you take?"

"To go where?"

"To that country—to the place where you left Ben—to that horrible gorge in which Fred was lost."

"Why do you ask? Do you wish to go there?"

"Perhaps so; but it is not my place to answer questions. I am here to ask them, and it is for you to answer me. What is the route?"

"It is necessary to go a long distance by sea, Miss Fanny, and then the land-journey is not a long one, but it is through a rugged and uninhabited country, infested by Indians, who may be friendly or hostile, as it happens."



"Why did Ben stay there? Why did he not come home with you?"

"Because he liked the wild life; because he wanted to hunt some more, and to range through that wonderful country."

"Was there no other reason?"

"He remained, if you must know the chief reason, because he wished to search for poor Fred."

"To search for Fred? Could he expect to find any thing of him but his bones? Could he even hope to find those poor remains?"

"He thought it possible that Fred might still be living."

"Fred living!" exclaimed Fanny, starting up in great excitement. "Can this be so? Why did you not tell me this before, Professor? Is it possible that Fred is still alive?"

"I do not believe it to be possible, Miss Fanny."

"Why, then, do you say that Ben thought he might still be living?"

"He thought there was a bare chance, the merest possibility, that his brother had escaped with his life, after his fall into that terrible chasm, and he resolved to search for him as long as that possibility remained."

Do you think that there was any such possibility?"

"All things are possible with God, Miss Fanny; but I do not hesitate to assure you that there is no human possibility that your brother could have survived that fall. The wall of the great cañon, at the place where he was lost, could not have been less than half a mile high, and it was nearly perpendicular, as far as we could see."

"How, then, could Ben entertain such a hope?"

"The mountaineer who was with us, wishing to say something to cheer your brother, I suppose, suggested that it was not entirely impossible that Fred might still be alive. On hearing that, Ben immediately declared that there was a chance, and resolved to pursue it."

"Why did you not tell me this when you first returned, Professor?"

"Because I thought that you had trouble enough at that time, and I did not wish to increase it by telling you of Ben's determination. I meant to break it to you after a while."



"What did Ben say? How did he express his determination?"

"I remember it well. He said that he intended to penetrate that gorge, to search for Fred while his life lasts, and to find him, alive or dead, or to lay his bones in the same abyss."

"And he will do it," said Fanny, in a tone of deep mournfulness. "He is not a man to make such a declaration lightly. Nothing can appall him—nothing can deter him—for his resolution is unconquerable. I see it all now, and I wish you had told me of this sooner. Ben will persist in that insane and hopeless attempt, until that horrible, ravenous gorge shall have swallowed up both my brothers, and I will be left alone in the world. Nothing but persuasion can change him, and I alone can persuade him. When I get there, I must coax him to come home with me."

"When you get there!" exclaimed the astonished Professor. "When you get where, Miss Fanny? What do you mean?"

"When I get to California—to the place where Ben is—or to that river and the great gorge," calmly answered the young lady.

"Are you making fun of me?"

"By no means. Why should I?"

"For no reason that I know of; but you speak very strangely."

"I am sure that I speak plain English. It is easy to understand me."

"Too easy, I am afraid. Do you really mean to say that you think of going there yourself?"

"I have already thought of it, and I have determined to go."

"You! I can not tell you how you astonish me, Miss Fanny. You would only throw your life away."

"I am sure that I can live wherever you can, Professor Belzoni."

"You must permit me to doubt it, although I know that you have a wonderful will. Have you considered the obstacles, the dangers, the hardships that you must encounter?"

"I have considered every thing, my dear friend. If the



perils and difficulties were ten times as great, they would not change my determination, for I have resolved to go."

"But your mother—what will Mrs. March say? Will she permit you to undertake such a journey?"

"I am my own mistress, Professor Belzoni, and my accomplished stepmother does not take much interest in me, farther than as she considers me something of an ornament to her parlors, and something of an attraction at her parties. Any opposition that I may meet with from her will be purely personal and selfish, and it will not interfere with my purpose."

"Such a rough life, Miss Fanny, and so full of hardship! Surely you do not know what lies before you. There are no ladies'-maids and no cooks in the wilderness; neither are there any houses or carriages."

"I should despise myself if such trifles could deter me. It is useless to argue the question any more."

"Have you, then, absolutely determined to go?"

"Absolutely."

"When do you expect to start?"

"As soon as I can complete my preparations and can learn the route."

"I will show you the route. If you really mean to go, you must take me with you."

"Are you in earnest, my dear friend? Will you really accompany me?"

"With your permission."

"It is most gladly given. You fill me with joy, Professor. I knew that I must have a traveling companion, and that had troubled me more than any thing else, for I could not make up my mind to apply to any one."

"Not even to me?"

"How could I ask you to leave your scientific duties and pleasures?"

"There is no pleasure so great to me as to do you a service, and no duty so imperative as to obey your commands. Besides, did any one, except yourself, love your brothers more than I did?"

"I may consider you engaged, then, for the expedition?"

"You may. But tell me—have you any definite plan? What do you expect to do?"



"I must find Ben. If there is really any hope that Fred may be living, I wish to search for him. If not, I must try to persuade my remaining brother to return with me."

"Very well; and you will wish to start soon?"

"As soon as possible."

"I will make my own preparations, and will advise you with regard to your outfit. I will also engage passage to the Isthmus, and run our chances for a vessel up the coast on the Pacific side. I must now leave you, for it is near morning, and I know that you need sleep. I will soon see you again."

"*Au revoir*, Professor. What you do, let it be done quickly."

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A MOUNTAINEER LET LOOSE.

LA CIUDAD DE LOS ANGELES—the City of the Angels—was not a city of much beauty or importance before that country passed into the possession of the Americans, although it was the capital of the Californias and the residence of the Governor of the province. Notwithstanding its heavenly name, it was any thing but a heavenly abode, and none but fallen angels would have been likely to choose it for a dwelling-place.

Like all Mexican towns, it was badly built and badly kept, filthy in the extreme, and unpleasant to the sight and smell. It contained a few good dwellings of the rich, and a number of miserable habitations, infested with vermin, in which none but Mexicans could live. In its ill-conditioned streets, among a few gayly-dressed caballeros, were scattered throngs of leperos and pelados, with the usual amount of beggars and pordioseros.

In one of the dirty streets was a pulqueria, or liquor-shop, which was a famous resort for the lower classes of the inhabitants. It was crowded, on the evening succeeding an early spring day, by a miscellaneous collection of Mexicans, among whom,



in addition to the leperos and other rough characters of the town, were vaqueros, or cattle-herdsmen, from the plains, arrieros, or muleteers, from the interior, whose animals occupied the adjoining corral, and California Indians, the most expert horsemen in the world, who seemed lost without their steeds and their lassos.

Mingled with these were a few women, dark-skinned and fiery-eyed poblanas, wearing the usual enagua, or red or yellow petticoat, under a loose chemisette, who were quite as uproarious and nearly as dirty as the men. All were talking in a vulgar slang, almost unintelligible to an outsider, and all were drinking their favorite pulque, or more fiery mezeal, or still more potent aguardiente, which was served out to them in large tumblers by the landlord, a villainous-looking fellow, with whom a sleeveless sack served both as coat and shirt.

Among the crowd that was thus collected and occupied, burst in an American mountaineer, who was evidently in one of the advanced stages of inebriation. He was a tall and sinewy fellow, whose age could not even be guessed at, his face was so browned by exposure, seamed by the scars of many a desperate encounter, and furrowed by a life of severe toil and frequent debauchery.

On his shaggy head was a crimson turban, in the Indian style, which was set awry upon it, and only partly covered his long and matted locks, which straggled into his eyes and over his face. His hunting-shirt and leggings, of dressed deer-skin, were tricked out with all the savage finery of fringes and porcupine-quills, and his moccasins were richly ornamented; but all were defiled by mud and dirt, and streaked with the stains of his debauch. A scarlet sash, in which were stuck his pipe and his hunting-knife, completed his attire, and his right hand grasped his faithful rifle, from which the true mountain-man is never parted.

If he had been sober, and in his proper place in the mountains or on the plains, he would have been a splendid specimen of uncultivated manhood; but, with his staring and bloodshot eyes, and his wild and unkempt appearance, as he entered the pulqueria half drunk, he was only a specimen of the "mountaineer let loose," and was an object to be feared and shunned.



The guests of the pulqueria evidently thought so, for the poblanas shrieked and huddled together in a corner, and the men scowled at him and felt for their weapons, with many a muttered curse upon the "maldito barbaro."

But the rough mountaineer was in a good humor, or wished to be so, in spite of his fierce looks. After staring around the room with a semi-idiotic smile, he staggered up to the counter, and dashed his broad hand down upon it with a force that made the house tremble and brought another series of shrieks from the frightened girls.

"Wagh!" he exclaimed, with a voice like the fall of an avalanche. "Who's afeard of me? This child is as mild as a suckin' fawn, and he wouldn't hurt an Injun baby this night, though I've got the devil in me, bigger'n a he grizzly, when I'm r'iled. Landlord, mesorero, or whatever you call yourself, set out fur these gamecocks an arroba of pulque, and I will pay fur it—I, Jim Warmack, the big medicine wolf of the mountains, by thunder! Do you hear me? Who's afeard of me? Somos amigos y hermanos—that's the talk. Ven a beber conmigo. (We are friends and brothers. Come and drink with me.) Don't you understand your own lingo, you yaller-bellied sneaks?"

The mountaineer accompanied this invitation by dashing down on the counter a number of pieces of gold and silver, the jingle of which made the eyes of the host sparkle, and caused several of the Mexicans to start up and come forward.

The man in the sack poured out the pulque, and the thirsty crowd drank it greedily, amid cries of "Viva el extranjero! Viva el pulque!" (Hurrah for the stranger! Hurrah for pulque!) The women forgot their fright, and gradually approached the mountaineer, who was soon the recipient of caresses from them, which caused many dark looks among the arrieros and leperos.

"None of your soda-spring stuff fur me!" exclaimed Warmack, with a contemptuous glance at the pulque drinkers. "But hyar's a loss ken jest knock the hind sights off a halt gallon of aguardiente. Dreen it out here, landlord, and take your pay out of this stuff."

As the mountain-man poured down tumbler after tumbler



of the fiery brandy, apparently endeavoring to "make drunk come" as quickly as possible, his intoxication deepened and became more manifest. He burst out into wilder exclamations, mingled with boasts of his own prowess and exploits, and expressions of contempt toward the Mexicans.

"*Wagh!*" he shouted. "Is thar any money in this crowd? Hef you got any of the white or yaller stuff in your greasy pockets, you poor coyotes? Hyar's loads of it. Who wants to set up a monté bank? Old Jim Warmack will furnish the dinero, and will bet ag'inst it, too, by thunder!"

As no one responded to this liberal offer, but all scowled at him in silence, he began to grow angry, and to abuse them more heartily.

"What makes you hang back, you cowardly buffler calves? Don't you know a man when you see him? Ven a ver los toros! Bring on your bull-fights! Hyar's a hoss ken take your biggest black bull by the tail, and fling him in his tracks. Quien quiere pélear? Who wants to fight? *Wagh!* You couldn't fight the little finger of this chile, you cowardly curs! You ain't no more 'count than Digger Injuns. You ain't fit fur nuthin' but to sit in the sun and pick the lice off of each other's heads."

"Que loco es este barbaro!" said a dusky arriero. "Es boracho y medio tonto." (What a madman is this barbarian! He is drunk and half-crazy.)

"Who says I am half-crazy?" shouted the mountaineer. "Let him show himself, and I will put his dried-up carcass in my pipe and smoke it. Come here, muchacha, and see what a man is!"

Seizing one of the poblanas by the arm, he dragged her to him, while she screamed in his rough grasp.

At this moment a tall and well-dressed young American entered the pulqueria, and took his stand near the door, regarding the proceedings with a frown.

The Mexicans had submitted to the taunts and insults of the mountaineer, with no symptoms of displeasure but dark looks and angry mutterings; for they were cautious about provoking a collision with a man who, notwithstanding his inebriated condition, was evidently a hard subject to "handle." But, when they saw him taking liberties with one of their



women, the indignity was too much for them to endure, and they bristled up toward him, with threatening looks and ready weapons.

"*Sacré enfant de Gârce !*" exclaimed Warmack, as he saw them approach. "Do you think you can scare me, you lizard-eating dogs? I'll take the sculp of the first cuss that comes nigh me, quicker'n a streak of lightnin' ken slide down a greased pole!"

He grasped his rifle by the barrel, but the tall American stepped up to him at that time, and touched him on the shoulder.

As Warmack turned around, with a nod of recognition, a wily Mexican slipped up to him, and made a pass at him with his knife.

The mountaineer stepped aside, receiving but a slight wound, and, as he turned, gave his assailant a tremendous kick in the stomach, which doubled him up and caused him to roll on the floor in agony. At the same time, he lost his own balance, and fell backward.

The Mexicans, seeing him fall, and thinking him to be at their mercy, rushed forward, to take revenge for his insults and for the hurt of their companion; but the stalwart stranger, with one stride, stood over the body of the fallen man, and, seizing the rifle of the latter by the barrel, made it whirl swiftly around his head, while the astonished Mexicans fell back on all sides.

"Stand back!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder. "This man is not yet meat for buzzards!"

"*Que quieren ustedes ?*" he then said, in a milder tone, and lowering his weapon. "*No viden ustedes que este hombre es boracho ?*" (What do you want? Don't you see that this man is drunk?)

This appeal did not produce as much effect as his former action, for the Mexicans, with weapons drawn and with threatening demonstrations, gathered around the door, as if they intended to prevent the egress of the two strangers. The landlord of the pulqueria made his appearance with a bell-mouthed *escopeta*, and the frightened women huddled together in a corner.

Warmack, in the mean time, had staggered to his feet, and



stood by the side of his defender, glaring viciously and defiantly at his antagonists, with a heavy stool in his hand.

"Wait a moment, Jim," whispered the stranger. "Stand steady while I clear the doorway, and then you must rush out with me."

"Give me one chance at 'em, Ben. Let me sweep the dirty thieves out of the house, Mr. March."

"No. You must do as I tell you. This is no place for us, and here is the patrol."

"The patrulla! the patrulla!" shouted the Mexicans, as Ben March advanced upon them with the clubbed rifle uplifted. They scattered in all directions, and the two Americans stepped out of the open door, into the midst of a dozen ragged soldiers, who immediately pounced upon Jim Warmack.

Bellowing like a mad bull in his rage, the mountaineer shook them off, and laid two of them low with his heavy stool. Ben March, whirling the long rifle about his head, compelled the rest to beat a retreat, and then, seizing his friend by the arm, dragged him up the dark and dirty street.

They were pursued by many yells, and a few ill-directed shots; but the soldados, unwilling to come to close quarters with the Americans, contented themselves with making a noise and with arresting a stray pelado, or street loafer, whom they triumphantly marched off to the calabozos.

Ben March hurried the mountaineer along so rapidly, that he was unable to ask any questions, until they reached a house of decent appearance, which the former entered, and unlocked the door of a room on the ground floor, in which a light was still burning, pushing his friend in before him.

"Whar did you come from, Mr. March? When did you git here?" asked Warmack, when he had taken a seat, and had recovered his breath.

"From Monterey. I reached Los Angeles this evening."

"Did you fix up things thar?"

"Every thing is arranged, and I wish to start in the morning. It will be necessary to leave this place, after our scrimmage of to-night. The patrulla will not molest us before morning, but then they will look for us."



"Fur me, you mean, sir. I ort to hev kep' out of that scrape, but I was full of brandy, and I had narry sense."

"Let us say no more about it. Lie down on the lounge, and sleep off the effects of the brandy."

"On that?" said the mountaineer, looking contemptuously at the narrow bed. "Do you reckon I could sleep on such a thing as that? The floor is good enough for this child."

So saying, he stretched himself out on the floor, and was soon snoring most prodigiously.

Ben March, as he might not enjoy such a luxury again in a long time, if ever, undressed himself and laid down on the bed, which—an unusual thing in that country—was furnished with clean sheets.

Early in the morning, Warmack was up and stirring. He stumbled through the house, abusing the dark passages, until he reached the back yard, where there was a well. He drew up several buckets of water, which he emptied on his shaggy head, then gave it a severe rubbing, and returned to the room in which he had passed the night, where he found his friend up and dressed, and packing his aparigos, or saddle-bags.

"When do you allow to start, Mr. March?" asked the mountaineer. "Hyar's a hoss as wants to light out of here as quick as he ken. This child has had enough of the settlements to last him awhile."

"I am glad to hear it, for it may be a long time before we see them again. Every thing is ready, Jim. The mules and horses are in a corral a little way outside of the town, and we have nothing to do but to pack them and mount. I have prepared provisions enough to last us a long while."

"But how are we goin' to git out to the corral? That dog-goned patrulla will be sneakin' around to ketch me, and I mought git r'iled at 'em."

"I have two good horses here, that will carry us out there in quick time. They can easily run away from the raw-boned nags of the soldados."

"Let's be movin', then. I kain't breathe right in this hole, nohow, and I hev to keep filled up with aguardiente to stand the smell. I hope we will hev better luck than we had last year, but I am doubtin' whether we ever git to the bottom of that cañon."



"Do you doubt that we are men? I think we would have succeeded last year, if the rainy season had not come on and driven us away. I will do it, Jim Warmack, or I will die in making the effort. I hope you will not forget that you promised to stand by me."

"*Me!* You don't ketch this hoss fidgettin' a promise that he has made to a friend. You ken jest bet your bottom dollar, Mr. March, that old Jim Warmack will stick to you as long as thar's a button on Gabe's coat. 'Pears like I'd be wil'in' to give my life, over and over ag'in, to find that boy."

"I believe you, old friend. We will set out as soon as we get our coffee, and here it comes."

A peon brought in some hot coffee, of which the friends drank freely. They then mounted their horses, and left the city, keeping out of sight as much as possible until they were beyond the limits of Los Angeles.

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About two weeks after Ben March and Warmack had set out for the interior, an American vessel touched at the port of San Pedro, and landed two passengers—a dark-featured gentleman with spectacles, and an American lady.

After making some inquiries at the port, with an unsatisfactory result, they went on to Los Angeles, where they were so fortunate as to meet the American consul from Monterey, who furnished them with the information that they desired. He told them that the person for whom they were inquiring had gone to the Colorado, accompanied by an American mountaineer. He also described the object of their journey, and the route which they intended to take.

After remaining a few days at Los Angeles, the travelers went into the interior, with a sufficient mulada, or pack-train, under the charge of an experienced hunter and guide, a French Canadian, named Pierre Xarbois.



## CHAPTER IV.

## DOWN IN THE DEPTHS.

WHEN Fred March reached the end of his fall, he first examined himself, to make sure that none of his limbs were broken or missing, and then felt for his rifle, which had been strapped behind his back when he was let down the precipice.

The rifle was safe, and he perceived that he had sustained no personal injury, beyond a few pretty severe bruises.

As he was so careful in his examination, and as he found himself in such good condition, it is reasonable to conclude that he was not killed by his fall.

It is not probable, therefore, that he had fallen the full distance of half a mile and upward, or from the height at which he had been suspended to the bottom of the cañon.

In fact, he had fallen but a short distance, comparatively, and the force of his fall had been broken by several circumstances, which it is necessary to describe.

When the young gentleman proposed to allow himself to be let down over the edge of the precipice, for the purpose of exploring the side of the immense chasm, he had no apprehension of the danger that he would incur in making the attempt. He was, in truth, incapable of fear, and never troubled himself to give a thought to the perilous side of any enterprise in which he wished to embark. He had, therefore, been a source of continual anxiety to his brother, who considered himself bound to look after Fred as if he were a child, and who found plenty of business for his hands and eyes in watching him. Fred compared his grave and careful brother to a hen with one chicken, and had become so accustomed to his guidance and control, that he felt as if Ben was responsible for all his reckless escapades and dashing adventures.

He had no reason to feel any fear when he was let down from the edge of the cliff, except such as was natural to a



person about to be suspended from such a giddy height; for his friends above were as strong as they were faithful, and he knew that the hide rope was capable of supporting more than five times his weight. It was with an almost childlike confidence that he allowed himself to be let down into that awful gulf.

But Ben was troubled. He was restless and uneasy while the preparations were being made, and, when the descent was actually commenced, his trepidation was such that he could hardly hold the rope.

Poor Ben March! Strong and brave as he was, he never felt any fear for himself, but he was appalled by the slightest danger when it affected Fred. He would gladly have been lowered into the cañon in the place of his brother; but he was so big and so heavy, and Fred was such a light weight, that he was ashamed to make the proposition.

A loop was made in the end of the rope, and the young man, as it dangled over the edge of the precipice, seated himself in the loop, holding the rope with his hands. His short-barreled rifle was strapped upon his back, and his powder-horn and bullet-pouch were slung at his side. His brother had tried to dissuade him from taking his weapons, as they might be in his way; but Fred thought it likely that he might see some wonderful game in that wonderful place, and it was the light of his ambition, at that time, to shoot a *carnero cimmaron*, or mountain sheep.

As has been said, a ledge had been noticed, at a considerable distance down the cliff, from which an excellent view could be had, and from which, it was thought, a way of further descent might be opened. This ledge was the point that Fred desired to reach.

After seating himself in the loop, and grasping the rope firmly in both hands, he shut his eyes for a few moments, and committed himself to the care of God, while his friends lowered him slowly down into the abyss.

When he opened his eyes he shuddered, and his head swam, as he found himself suspended from that giddy elevation. But in a short time he became accustomed to the situation, and regained his confidence and the full control of his senses. He then could look calmly at the immense distance



below him, at the jagged and cavernous precipice which he was descending, and at the beetling cliffs of the other wall of the ravine. His position, perilous as it was, had great charms for him. He had never witnessed, or expected to witness, a scene of such sublimity, and he felt that the sight was worth all the danger that he encountered and was then encountering.

At last he reached the ledge which he had seen from above, and the slackening of the rope informed his companions that he had found footing.

"Be careful, Fred!" shouted Ben March, from above, at the top of his voice.

"Ay, a-ay! Make the rope fa-a-st!" replied Fred.

The ledge which he had reached was nearly flat, and extended more than twenty feet from a sort of cavern, formed by the overhanging wall of the ravine. Walking to the inner part, or root of the ledge, the young man was completely concealed from his companions above. Standing as near the edge as he dared to, his enraptured vision took in the immense abyss before him, the seemingly illimitable expanse of rugged and precipitous rocks, stretching out to the right and left, and the lofty cliffs on the other side, at the foot of which the river could be seen, shining down in the depths, like a silver ribbon.

The scene was one of unparalleled grandeur, and Fred March was so penetrated by its sublimity, that he thought he could never tire of gazing upon it. He wished that Ben could be there, to admire the wonderful prospect; and he wished, above all things, that his sister Fanny could enjoy it with him, or that he might make a sketch that would convey to her some faint idea of its glory.

The view from the ledge was all that could be expected, and the flower which Professor Belzoni coveted would be within his reach as he ascended to the top of the cliff; but this was not all that the young man had been sent to accomplish. His companions wished to know whether there was any way of reaching the bottom of the gorge from that point, and this was a subject in which Fred was himself deeply interested. He felt an uncontrollable desire to penetrate the mysteries of the great cañon, to examine its rugged heights



and explore its cavernous recesses. If a distant view was so glorious, what wonders would be disclosed by a nearer inspection?

As a boy feels at the entrance of a cave that he finds in the forest—that its interior must contain unknown mysteries, and must be the receptacle of untold treasures—so felt Fred March, as he looked upon the great cañon of the Colorado whose awful abyss, as he believed, no white man had ever been adventurous enough to penetrate.

He crawled on his hands and knees to the very limit of the ledge, with his right arm through the loop of the lariat, and laid down with his face to the rock as he looked over, for he knew that the view from the edge would make him so giddy that he would be unable to stand for a moment.

He saw that the ledge curved inward from its outer extremity, to a greater degree than the cliff which he had descended, and that he was then far out from the side of the main wall of rock, hanging over the tremendous chasm. If the ledge should by any means become detached from the side of the ravine, it would go thundering down, clear to the bottom of the cañon, and he would be ground to nothingness.

Directly below him was a sharp ridge of rock, at a distance of fifty or sixty feet, running parallel with the wall of the cañon. If a plumb line had been let down from one of his eyes, it would have struck the apex of the ridge. On the outside, the ridge fell off sharply toward the east, until it terminated in a perpendicular cliff, which extended, as Fred March supposed, sheer down to the bed of the river. On the inside, it sloped away more gradually toward the cavernous side of the ravine, but without affording any foothold for man until the view was closed by darkness. Fred imagined, however, that he could see, far down in the depth, a sort of terraced formation, which might serve as a pathway, if it could once be reached.

If it could once be reached! The young man stretched his head over the ledge, striving to penetrate the obscurity below until he became giddy with longing, as well as with the giddiness natural to his situation.

He drew himself back upon the rock and reflected.

The rope by which he had been lowered was long enough



to permit him to pass over the ledge, but was not long enough to reach the ledge below. He might, however, as he thought, safely go further down, and attain a position which would enable him to determine whether there was any possibility of finding a passage below, along the inside face of the ridge. If there was, he might cause himself to be hauled up, and might again make the descent, provided with rope enough to reach the apex of the ridge, and a line by which he could lower himself down its inside slope.

Having come to this conclusion, his resolve was immediately made.

He shouted to his companions at the top of the cliff, and contrived to make them understand that he wished them to let out all the rope they had, and to make the end fast.

This was done, as Ben could not well remonstrate or argue the question at that light, and the young man threw the loop over the ledge.

He then, after pulling the rope taut, let himself down over the ledge, until he reached the loop, in which he seated himself, as his wrists were tired, and he was not a little giddy.

He was still within about ten feet of the apex of the ridge, but he had a good view of the inside face of it, as he looked down to see if the observations which he had made from above could be confirmed by a nearer view.

He perceived that the terraced formation which he had noticed, extended downward and backward, until it was lost in the darkness, or terminated by the main cliff; but there appeared to be a hole, or passage through the rocks, toward the north, in which, as he thought, he could see a light, as if it reached to the air and sunshine below.

If he had rope enough to lower him to the ridge, he might let himself down its inside face by means of a line, after which he might work his way along the terraces, and explore the passage through which the light came. If he could do so, he thought it probable that a way to reach the bottom of the ravine might open to him.

When he had made these observations, he concluded that it was time for him to return and report to his companions what he had seen.



When he let himself down toward the ridge and while he was seated in the loop, he had not thought of the possible danger of the rope chafing or wearing against the ledge, in such a manner as to injure the tension. There was such a danger, however, as was soon to become fearfully apparent to him.

To pass over the ledge, which jutted out from the side of the cliff, it was necessary for the rope to diverge several feet from a perpendicular line. When he was attached to the end of it, below the ledge, his weight caused it to bear with a pretty severe strain against the rock, and the twisting and swaying about to which it was naturally subjected, produced a friction between rope and rock, in which the former, as the weaker body, was bound to be subdued.

As Fred March cast his glance upward, in calling to his friends to haul up the rope, he perceived the dangerous position in which he was placed, and knew that at any moment his only means of escape from the abyss might be cut off.

This knowledge, so suddenly obtained, communicated to him such a shock as few men experience more than once in a lifetime. His head whirled, and his hands nearly let go their hold of the rope, as he thought of the terrible fate that might be his if that rope should break. He deplored his heedlessness in thus letting himself down into such apparent danger; but it was too late for such reflections, and he could only think of his approaching death, and of the anguish that poor Ben would feel, when he knew that his darling brother was lost in that abyss.

In the mean time, his friends at the top of the cliff had begun to haul up the rope, and Fred watched it as it chafed and grated against the sharp edges of the rock above him.

A few moments of agonizing suspense ensued, and then, with a report like the crack of a rifle, one of the strands snapped, and the rope trembled like a whiplash that is shaken.

The young man closed his eyes, and gave himself up for lost. He did not fall, however, and he soon recovered his self-control, and began to reflect upon his situation.

He noticed that his friends had stopped pulling up the rope, and he could not doubt that they had heard the snapping of



the strand, which had caused them to cease their efforts. What must be their feelings, at knowing that such a slight tie held him to life!

Fred had now made up his mind that the rope must break, and he must fall. Whether his friends should again endeavor to haul him up, or should leave him suspended there until they could try some other expedient, it would not be long before the rawhide must wear off against the ledge, and his weight must snap it. This being manifest, he had only to consider what must ensue on the breaking of the rope.

His position was not in reality near as perilous as those at the top of the cliff must necessarily suppose it to be; he was not actually suspended over the abyss, as there was a ridge directly beneath him.

It was true that the outside face of the ridge sloped away so rapidly as to be almost precipitous, and that, if he should fall on that side, he must quickly slide into eternity; but, if he should happen to fall on the inside face, it was possible that he might escape with his life.

Acting on this belief, and confident that the rope would break, he did not look upward when he again slowly commenced to ascend; but kept his gaze fastened on the ridge below him, and endeavored to throw the weight of his body toward the inside of the ledge, so that he might fall in that direction.

The awful moment soon came. With another loud report, the rope broke, and the young man felt himself rushing through the air as he was precipitated upon the rocks below.

Singularly enough, there happened to be passing along the apex of the ridge, at that moment, a specimen of the game which Fred had been so anxious to shoot—a bighorn, or mountain sheep. These animals, which combine some of the characteristics of the deer and the goat, are about five feet in length, and nearly four feet high, with horns that are more than three feet long and very large and heavy.

With one of these creatures the young gentleman made acquaintance in a very unceremonious and unexpected manner. At the end of his fall of twenty feet and upward, his side struck against the bighorn, crushing it down on the rock, and frightening it quite as badly as it was hurt. The instinct of



the animal caused it to quickly regain its footing on the inside of the ledge, and Fred grasped its horns with the tenacity of despair. Thus locked together, they rolled down the rough surface of the slope, until their progress was stopped by a wall of rock.

When Fred had examined himself, and had seen that none of his limbs were broken, he looked around for the bighorn, and saw the animal lying near him, overcome by terror, as much as by the injuries it had received.

He could not find it in his heart to kill the creature that had probably saved his life, but allowed it to rise and slowly limp away. It went toward the passage which Fred had supposed would lead down through the rocks, and he, as soon as he regained the use of his legs, followed it as rapidly as possible, hoping that it might show him a way to descend to the bottom of the ravine.

He worked his way along the roughly-terraced slope, until he reached the side of the cliff, and went into the passage. He descended this, without much difficulty, for a considerable distance, and at last came out into the air and light, at a point where he could see the ridge hanging nearly over him, like a bridge.

He had descended so far, that he could distinguish the color of the grass along the bank of the river; but, he was not yet near the foot of the cliff, which fell away precipitously before him, seeming to afford him no means of further progress.

Casting his glance to the left, he saw his friend the bighorn leisurely promenading down a narrow path against the face of the rock, and he resolved to follow it. He did so, keeping his face toward the cliff, and holding on by all the projecting points that he could find.

His progress was slow and painful; but, in the course of an hour, he reached a place where he could sit down and rest. After resting, he scrambled down a slope covered with loose stones, until he attained another perpendicular cliff, where he saw the bighorn carefully picking its way along another narrow path, as if to show him how to descend the mountain.

Again he followed his leader, until he reached a narrow



resting-place. As he was sitting down here, he saw a mountain sheep, standing on a rock a short distance above him. After satisfying himself that it was not his friend which had been leading him down the cliff, he leveled his rifle and fired at it.

The animal fell, and lodged against a stone in the path that the young man was pursuing. Slinging his rifle at his back, he hastened forward to seize it; but he had hardly reached it, when he missed his footing, and he and the bighorn fell down the cliff together.

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## CHAPTER V.

### ISABEL.

By the bank of the Colorado river, down at the bottom of the great cañon, an Indian of the Mohave tribe was slowly walking along a narrow and rocky pathway, which led up the course of the river.

Like most of his tribe, he was tall and finely formed, being over six feet in height, and of splendid proportions. He was dressed differently from the roving Indians of the plains, being clad in a simple brown tunic, which extended to his knees, and was confined by a belt around the waist. His symmetrical legs showed beneath the tunic, and its short sleeves exposed to view his bare arms, heavy with bracelets of gold. On his head was a handsome circlet of dyed feathers, and across his breast was a richly embroidered scarf, covered with ornaments of gold, several of which, in the form of plates, rings and crescents, were suspended from his neck. In his right hand he carried a long spear, and his only other weapon was a sharp knife, which he wore at his girdle.

His features were regular and fine, and the expression of his countenance was meditative and intelligent. In short, he realized the popular idea of a young cacique of the time of Montezuma.

It was near sunset. In fact, it had long ago been sunset down in the great cañon, for the luminary of day was visible



at the bottom of that immense ravine only a few hours in the course of the day, rising much later, and setting much earlier, than on the plains.

In the upper world, also, it was near sunset, as was shown by the crimson and gold-colored clouds that streaked the sky far to the southward. Down in the cañon the shades of evening had begun to cover the earth, and the stupendous cliffs upon either side appeared to draw nearer together as darkness approached. The river, at the point where the Indian then was, spread out to the width of more than a mile, with a swift but comparatively smooth current. At that point, also, its bed was nearly shut in by the opposite walls of the ravine, between which it flowed, dark and sullen, as if anxious to find its way out of such a confined passage into the light and breadth of the plains below.

The Indian walked slowly and thoughtfully along the rough pathway, until he came to a place where the cañon widened toward the west, and the bank of the river spread out into a broad and beautiful meadow, covered with rich grass and dotted with tall trees.

Here he quickened his pace, until he crossed the meadow, turned a large rock that stood at the edge of the river, and came to a point where the stream dashed and foamed over its rocky bed, for a distance of several hundred yards.

As he halted here for a moment, he was startled by the unusual sound of the report of a rifle, which came from the western cliffs, and resounded through the cañon with innumerable echoes.

"Dios de mi alma! Que es eso? God of my soul! What is that?" he exclaimed, in good Spanish, as he looked in the direction from which the sound proceeded.

He saw the light smoke of the rifle, a short distance up the cliff, and saw an animal fall from one point of rock to another. Then a figure, which he took to be that of a white man, ran along the face of the cliff toward the animal, and directly both fell headlong together.

With an exclamation of wonder, the Indian hastened his steps up the acclivity, until his progress seemed to be barred by an enormous mass of rocks, which towered up from the bed of the stream toward the wall of the cañon. Here was



a considerable fall in the river, forming the head of the rapids. Here, also, the path which the Indian was following was worn as if it had been used for a long time, and it led directly to the mass of rock which blocked up the way.

Turning a corner of the pile, he found himself in a neat little yard, shut in on three sides by high walls of rock; and before him was a rude house, constructed of stones, abutting on the main mass of rock.

As he entered this yard, a beautiful girl of sixteen ran out and greeted him.

The features and complexion of this maid of the cañon were of the true Spanish type, and her large and dark eyes seemed capable of expressing any shade of feeling, or any intensity of passion. They beamed with much joy and a little wonder as she met the tall and handsome Indian, and a most bewitching smile played about her red lips.

She was attired in a richly embroidered chemisette, formed of carefully-dressed deerskin, and a short petticoat of the same material, gayly painted and ornamented in the Indian fashion. Her little feet were shod with neat moccasins, reaching well up above the instep, but no stockings covered her dainty ankles. Her dark hair was bound at her forehead by an embroidered fillet, but thence it fell in thick and curling masses upon her shoulders, contrasting finely with the crimson and olive tints of her cheeks.

"Is it really you, Mito?" she said, in tones that were most musical. "What brings you here this evening? What is the matter with you? You look as if you had seen a spirit."

"It is really Mito, mi querida. Where is Father Francisco? I have something to tell him."

"It must be something very wonderful," complained the girl, pouting and looking displeased. "You have not a word for me, but you immediately ask for my father, as if I was not worth speaking to. What is the matter, Mito?"

"It is, indeed, something wonderful," earnestly replied the Indian. "It is something that has not been known for many, many years. I was coming to see you, Ysabel, when it happened. I must speak with your father. Is he in the house?"

"No; for he has just come out of it. There he stands. I



will go away, and you may speak to him as much as you please."

"Will you not stay and hear what I have to say, Ysabel? You are always glad to listen when I tell of something wonderful."

A venerable white man, with hair and beard nearly as white as his face, came forth from the rude stone house as they were speaking. He was clad in a brown tunic, like that worn by the Indian, except that it was not confined at the waist, and under the tunic were breeches of dressed deerskin. His head, like that of the girl, was uncovered, and showed a broad and noble forehead, under which his eyes gleamed with a mild and benignant radiance.

"What is the matter, Mito?" he asked, noticing the troubled look of the Indian. "What has happened, to bring the young chief here at this hour?"

"Something wonderful has happened, Father Francisco, and I hastened to tell you."

"What is it?"

"There is a white man in the cañon."

"A white man!" exclaimed Ysabel, joyfully clapping her hands. "Where is he? Why did you not bring him here? Is he young, or does he look like father?"

"I do not know," replied Mito, with a frown. "It was only for a moment that I saw him, and at a distance."

"This is truly something strange and unexpected," said the old man. "Such an event has not happened in many years."

"Not since you came among us, Father Francisco."

"Did you speak to him? Do you know for what purpose he has come here, or how he descended the mountain?"

"I know little about him, except that he is dead."

"Dead?"

"Dead?" repeated Ysabel, in a mournful tone.

"It was only for a moment that I saw him, Father Francisco, as I told Ysabel, and he was at such a distance that I could only see that he was a white man. I was coming up the pathway by the side of the river, when I heard the sound of a rifle. I looked toward the cliff, and saw a sheep fall, as if it had been shot. Then I saw the white man run along



the side of the rock to the sheep, and in a moment both fell from the cliff together. The fall must have killed the man, for I heard no cry."

"Why did you not go to him, Mito? Perhaps he was not killed outright."

"We want no more white men in the valley," replied the Indian, with a dark frown.

"But you should not refuse to help even an enemy, when he is wounded and suffering. You should have gone to him, Mito."

"I thought it would be best to come to you first, Father Francisco. It might not be a white man, I thought, but a spirit; for how could a man descend the cliff, which is as straight as the trunk of a tree, and reaches to the sky? You know all things, Father Francisco, and I came to you to ask you what should be done."

"I will go to him immediately, and you must guide me, Mito."

"I will go, too," said Ysabel. "Perhaps he is not quite dead."

"No, my child. He must be horribly mangled, if he is not dead, and the sight of blood and suffering would trouble your gentle spirit too much."

"But I will go, father, for I am not afraid, and I wish to see him. May I take the flask of aguardiente that you have saved so long?"

"Yes. If you must go, you must, I suppose. Bring me my staff, Ysabel."

In a few moments they set out, the young chief leading the way, and the old man slowly following him, leaning on his staff, with his daughter walking by his side.

They went past the falls, and down by the rapids, and then turned to the right, skirting along the edge of the meadow, toward the western cliff, that towered, so dark and frowning, far above them.

At the foot of the great precipice they saw the body of the white man, lying where he had fallen, among the fragments of rock that strewed the ground.

Ysabel shuddered, and remained behind, while her father and Mito went forward to examine the fallen man.



They found him lying on his side, doubled up, with his arms clasped over his head. Blood was scattered about him on the stones, and close to him lay the body of a mountain sheep. When they turned him over, he was motionless and to all appearance dead. In addition to other wounds, which they could not perceive, there was a bad cut on his head, from which the blood had flowed freely.

"Dios de mi alma! What a handsome fellow!" was the natural exclamation of Ysabel, who had stolen up to her father's side, and stood regarding the young man with looks of interest and pity. "I hope the pobrecito is not really dead."

Father Francisco kneeled down by the side of the stranger, and gently breathed into his mouth, through his pale and thin lips, as if to produce an artificial respiration. After a short period of this treatment, he called for the brandy, and poured a few drops down the throat of his patient. Another and a larger dose followed, and after a while the young man moved a little, moaned feebly, and opened his blue eyes.

"Santa Maria!" exclaimed Ysabel, opening her own eyes very wide. "What a fair skin he has! and what eyes of the hue of heaven! Thank God that he is not dead!"

The restoration to life of the young man was a very painful process to him, as was evidenced by his spasmodic movements and his pitiful groans; but he was soon so far recovered as to be able to sit up. He stared around wildly, as if bewildered by the strange scene, and the strange company in which he found himself. In trying to lift his left hand, he perceived that the arm hung uselessly at his side, and when he endeavored to rise, he was unable to use his left leg.

"Poor fellow! he has been sorely wounded," said Father Francisco.

"Who are you, and where am I?" asked the stranger.

"You are in the valley of the great cañon, and we are your friends. What is your name, and where have you come from?"

"Freddy," was the only reply.

Other questions were asked, but they elicited no answer from the young man, but "Freddy—Freddy—Freddy," accompanied by a vacant smile.



"His fall has injured his brain, I am afraid," said the old man. "He is badly hurt, and we must carry him to the house as carefully as we can."

Under the direction of Father Francisco, the Indian manufactured a litter of poles and branches, on which the wounded stranger was placed, and it was carried to the little stone house, Mito bearing one end, and the old man and Ysabel supporting another.

When they reached the house, the stranger was laid upon a couch, and Father Francisco proceeded to examine his wounds, discovering that his left arm was badly fractured, and his left leg broken below the knee. His head, also, had been severely injured, and his body had received many bruises. In fact, the old man perceived that his patient would require all his medical skill, and the best of care and nursing.

To all questions that were asked him, the young stranger could only reply by the single word—"Freddy"—with the same vacant stare and the same meaningless smile. Father Francisco had discovered, however, in the course of his examination, that his patient's name was Frederick March, and that he was an American.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FATHER FRANCISCO'S STORY.

THE recovery of Fred March was very slow. His broken limbs were skillfully set and carefully bound up in splinters by Father Francisco, who proved himself to be a good surgeon and a sensible physician; but his wounds had hardly begun to heal, when fever set in, and for a time his life was despaired of. It was only by means of his youth and his strong constitution, aided by great care and excellent nursing, that he was brought back from the verge of the grave, and restored to health, if not to his former strength.

During the delirium that accompanied his fever, Father Francisco hoped that the young man might make some disclosures concerning his past life, and the cause and manner



of his descent into the cañon ; as the sea, when it is convulsed by storms, sometimes casts up portions of wrecks that have been for a long time buried in its depths. But all such hopes were in vain. In the rolling and tossing of his mind, there came to the surface a few names, and a few allusions to matters and places of which the old man knew nothing ; but there was nothing which could give a clue to the place from which he had come, or the motive which had brought him into that region.

When his fever had passed away, and his health was so far recovered that he could be permitted to converse as much as he pleased, Father Francisco frequently recurred to the subject of the former life of his patient, and endeavored to learn how he had happened to attempt to descend the immense and precipitous wall of the cañon, and how he had accomplished the descent with so little injury, compared to the peril of the enterprise—how he had accomplished it, in fact, without being dashed into fragments long before he reached the bottom.

Anxious as Fred was to gratify the curiosity of his venerable friend, he was unable to do so. He could only rub his forehead, in a vain effort to recall the past, and shake his head mournfully, as he confessed his utter want of recollection of every thing that had occurred prior to the time that he was found at the foot of the cliff.

"I wish I could remember," he would say, "for I am as anxious to know about those matters as you are, if not more so ; but I have no remembrance of any thing that has ever happened to me, except during the time that I have been with you. I suppose that I used to live somewhere, that I had relatives and friends, and perhaps an occupation ; but all those things have passed from my memory, and I do not even know my name."

"Your name, I have no doubt, is Frederick March, for one of your garments is so marked."

"That must be my name, I suppose, for you tell me that I called myself Freddy, and that I could say nothing but Freddy when you found me. I am thankful that I am not left nameless. What is the matter with me, señor ? What has caused this loss of memory ?"



"The shock which your brain received when you fell from the cliff has produced it."

"But I can easily remember every thing that has nappened since that time."

"That is natural. It was the remembrance of the past that was obliterated by the shock, and not the power to remember that was destroyed. I have read of many such cases, but never before had personal experience of one."

"I remember my native language, as you see, and I have some knowledge of Spanish. I remember, also, many things that I must have learned at school or college. How is it that the memory of some things remains to me, while that of others is entirely swept away?"

"I can not answer you, my son. The brain is a very delicate and wonderful organ, and it has many mysteries which science has never been able to penetrate."

"Do you suppose that I will ever recover my memory?"

"It is possible that you may, although it is very doubtful. There have been instances of the restoration of memory to persons who have lost it; but the recovery has generally been produced, I think, by the action of disease, or by some sudden shock, which has thrown the brain back to its natural condition. While you were suffering with fever, I hoped that your brain might be so convulsed that it would throw off the weight that pressed upon it, and that you would recover your health and your memory together; but it was not fated to be so, and now I am afraid that your memory will never return to you."

"It is a sad loss, but God's will be done! I am happy with you and Ysabel, and I must not trouble myself about the unknown past."

When the soft spring days came, and the young man was so far recovered that he could walk out by the aid of a crutch, he was wont to sit in the yard in front of the stone house, with Ysabel and her father, enjoying the brief hours of sunshine, and the long twilight of the deep valley. Then he pressed Father Francisco to explain how it happened that he had severed himself from civilization, and had buried himself, with his beautiful daughter, at the bottom of the great cañon, and the old Mexican at last consented to tell his story



"My name," said he, "is Francisco Orteza and I was the descendant of a wealthy and influential family in California. Although I was rich, I chose to study medicine, and in time I became a well-known and esteemed physician. I thus gained a large income, which I added to my estate, and, as my habits were economical, and I took good care of my property, I became very wealthy.

"My nearest relative was a nephew, who lived with me, as he was an orphan, and assisted me in the management of my estate. He naturally expected to become my heir, and I encouraged him in that expectation, as I had firmly resolved that I would never marry.

"I was getting well advanced in years, when I changed my mind on the subject of marriage. In the course of my business travels I met a young lady of Chihuahua, for whom I conceived the most intense admiration, which quickly ripened into love. She loved me, I suppose, as well as so young a person could love an old man. At all events, we were married, with the joyful consent of her parents, who thought they were securing a splendid settlement for their portionless daughter.

"My nephew was greatly displeased when I brought home my young and beautiful wife, and he could not help manifesting his chagrin. I told him, however, that my marriage ought not to trouble him, as I intended to provide amply for him in any event, and he apparently became reconciled, treating my bride with the greatest consideration.

"I lived happily with my Ysabel but for a few years, and this daughter, to whom I gave her mother's name, was the only issue of our marriage. The child was about three years old, when her mother suddenly sickened and died. The loss was a heavy blow to me, but I thanked God that he had left me my little girl, who bid fair to equal her mother in all qualities of mind and person. Thenceforth I was entirely devoted to my child, and I have no doubt that my nephew, whose expectations I had encouraged, had reason to complain of my forgetfulness of his interests.

"About ten years ago, and when little Ysabel was hardly six years old, I had occasion to take a long journey into the interior. I went with a train and a good escort, and was



accompanied by my nephew and my child. In returning, I went aside from my route for the purpose of visiting the great cañon of the Colorado, of which I had often heard, and which I had for a long time desired to inspect personally.

"I alighted from my wagon with Ysabel, and walked for a considerable distance along the brink of the cañon, accompanied by my nephew. The grandeur of the scenery far surpassed my expectations, and I longed to explore the depths of the vast ravine. I am sure that I would have attempted to do so if I had been a younger man.

"I was destined to explore it, with or without the inclination. We had reached a point on the precipice not far from this place, and I had stopped to point out to Ysabel the lofty cliffs on the other side, and the river shining far below.

"As we were standing there, my nephew came up behind us, instigated, I suppose, by the desire of gaining possession of all my property, and of gaining it at once. With one strong push, he hurled us both over the edge of the cliff."

Fred March remained silent for a while, from sheer astonishment, while he gazed in wonder at the old man.

"It does not seem possible," he said, "that you should have been thrown down that terrible precipice, with a little child, and that you should both be living now to tell the tale."

"All things are possible with God, my son. It was to his good providence alone that we owed our escape, and I can not tell you in what manner our lives were saved. The side of the cañon is not as steep at that place as it is here, and a strong and active man, provided with proper implements, might accomplish the descent; but it was nothing short of a miracle that enabled such an old man and such a delicate child to reach the bottom with their lives."

"The escape of Ysabel was even more wonderful than your own."

"She was saved at first, I know, by falling upon me, and after the first fall I used all my care and expended all my strength for her. But it is impossible to explain our escape, or to account for it. We were found at the foot of the cliff by Mohaiwe, the chief of the tribe that inhabits the ravine, and the father of Mito, whom you have often seen here. He



regarded us as some superior beings, who had fallen from the skies, and he took us to his lodge, where my wounds were cured, as yours have been, and we have since remained among them, unable to get away."

"Do you not wish to get away? Have you ever tried to return to the upper world?"

"For my own part, I have no desire to leave the cañon. though I could wish, for the sake of Ysabel, to reach a civilized country. But it would be in vain for me to attempt to escape from this ravine, even if I should be permitted to do so."

"What hinders you from making the attempt?"

"The Indians. As I have told you, they regarded me as a superior being when I first appeared among them, and they have not yet abandoned that belief. They consider me as their 'great medicine,' and they would not part with me on any terms. My medical skill and my knowledge of chemistry have been very useful to them. Among other things, I have made gunpowder for them."

"Where did you get the materials?"

"The caves in the sides of the cañon furnish plenty of niter, and the Indians supply me with sulphur, which they procure from the north. The charcoal is an ingredient of which they know nothing, as I have wished to preserve my secret."

"The Indians, then, have means of access to the outer world?"

"Yes. They have never told me how they leave the cañon or return, but I have no doubt that they go down the river to the mouth of the gorge, where they meet other Mohaves, and where they also encounter white hunters and traders, with whom they barter for blankets, cotton goods, and other articles. I have frequently known them to exchange bullets of gold for bullets of lead."

"Bullets of gold! Where do they get the gold?"

"Here in this valley. I have no doubt that the cañon is rich in the precious metal. Come with me, and I will show you a little."

Fred March followed his conductor into the house, when the old man removed a stone which was so neatly fitted into



the rock as to seem to be a part of it, disclosing a large cavity, nearly filled with gold-dust and nuggets of virgin gold.

"Did you collect all this?" asked Fred, looking in astonishment at the mass of yellow metal.

"Not all of it; not much, in fact. The greater part of it has been brought to me by the Indians, who are ignorant of its real value, and whom I have not enlightened on the subject. It is useless for me to hoard it as I do, for I can never hope to carry it hence; but the love of gold clings to the heart of a white man wherever he goes. The Indians sometimes bring me large quantities of the metal, of which I make them a few ornaments, and the rest I keep."

"The Indians will not allow you to leave them, I suppose, if they are able to keep you here, but I think it is possible, with my help, for you to escape from the cañon. I can live happily in this place as long as Ysabel remains here, but this is not a proper home for her."

"Perhaps you may not be allowed to remain, my son. Perhaps it may not be long before we will be deprived of the society of the only white man whom we have seen for years."

"Why do you say so?"

"Mito does not look upon you with a favorable eye. It is evident that your presence here is not agreeable to him. The Indians will agree to whatever he says, and I am afraid that we shall have trouble on your account."

Fred looked at Ysabel, and she drew closer to his side. Whatever the Indians might say or do, those young people were determined that they would not be separated without a struggle.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE VOYAGEURS.

"So this, Professor Belzoni, is your great cañon."

"As you have made the same remark about fifty times, Miss March, without having been corrected, it is to be supposed that you are right. You are mistaken, however, in



asserting that it is *my* great cañon, for I can claim no proprietary interest in this wonderful work of nature. I wish I could, for I would then take some enterprising Yankee as a partner, who would show me how to make my property available, and I would become a rich man, if my Yankee partner should not swindle me out of my cañon before I was done with him."

"You need give yourself no uneasiness on that subject, Professor, as it is not likely that you will ever own the cañon, or any part of it. It seems, indeed, almost like sacrilege to speak of such a stupendous freak of nature as belonging to any man. I would as soon claim to be proprietor of the Atlantic ocean, or assert my ownership of a whirlwind."

"Your expressions are very strong, Miss Fanny, but they are perfectly justifiable. This is the work of the Almighty, and he alone is great enough to own it. It is to be counted among the wonders of the world, and I confess that I have never seen any thing that surpassed it in sublimity."

"I have been lost in wonder since we entered the cañon, and I have no words to express my admiration."

"The magnificence of the scenery has been sufficient to repay us for our labors and hardships thus far. How amply we would be rewarded if we could find poor Fred alive at the end of our journey."

"Ah, Professor, if we only could! But this is beyond hope, although I confess that I do hope. How far have we come since we entered the gorge?"

"About twenty miles, if I am not mistaken in my computation."

"Then we have thirty miles further to go, as you calculated that the place where Fred was lost was fifty miles from the mouth. Do you suppose that the navigation of the river will grow more difficult as we ascend it?"

"I do. The rapids will probably be more plentiful and more dangerous."

"Is it not possible that the gorge may be impassable in some places?"

"It is not likely to be so at this season. When the river is at a high stage it may be impossible to ascend the gorge, as the water may cover the ravine from cliff to cliff."



"Let us rest, Professor, for I perceive that it will take our men a long time to force the boats up those rapids."

Fanny March, as she was seated on a rock by the side of the swift river that rushed through the great cañon, was very different in appearance from the elegant Miss March who met Professor Belzoni in the back parlor after her mother's splendid party, and announced her intention of proceeding to the wilderness of the West on a wild and dangerous errand.

Her costly robes had given place to a short and stout garment of woolen stuff, nondescript in style, but well adapted to service in the rough and barbarous country through which she had been traveling. Her feet, instead of delicate slippers, were covered with strong shoes, and on her head was a little round hat, from which the last trace of a feather had disappeared. But her cheeks, though somewhat browned by months of exposure to the sun and wind, were glowing with the hue of health, and her eyes were as bright and radiant as those of the young eagle in the early morning.

Professor Belzoni, although not so greatly transformed, was very different from the neat, trim, and precise little man of science who had often delighted intelligent audiences in New York. The attire of the quiet gentleman had been changed for the rough garb of the hunter, and moccasins had taken the place of patent-leather boots. But, he still wore his spectacles, without which he could hardly have been recognized as Professor Belzoni.

The expedition had been planned by the Professor, who believed that the only practicable way to penetrate the great cañon was to ascend the river in boats of such light construction that they might easily be carried around the rapids and other places where the navigation might be impossible. He had wisely chosen a time of the year when the river was at a low stage, as then the current would be less violent, and the perils of navigation would not be so great.

On the Pacific coast he had engaged the services of Pierre Narbois, a veteran French-Canadian trapper and voyageur. On the lower Colorado Pierre had employed as a guide a Mohave Indian, to whom the whites had appropriately given the name of Big John, and Big John had induced two of his tribe to go with him as assistants.



They had halted at the mouth of the gorge, and had given their horses and mules in charge of two Californians who had accompanied them thus far, to be pastured and taken care of until their return.

They then constructed two boats, such as are called "bull-boats" by the traders and hunters of the Far West. They were made of willow rods, bent and fastened to a keel, so as to form the shape of a boat. Other rods were wattled into these longitudinally, and all were tightly bound together at the intersections. Soaked hides were stretched over this frame and left to dry, the seams being sewed with buckskin thongs and covered with pitch.

These boats, while they were capable of carrying heavy burdens, were very light and portable, and Professor Belzoni had no doubt that the party would be able to explore the gorge with them, if the enterprise was in any way practicable.

The mode of procedure was, to work their way as far as possible on the water during the day, and at night to camp on the rocky shore, where the boats were unloaded, hauled up, and turned over to dry. When rapids were encountered, the party was landed, and the boats were taken up by means of ropes. If the rapids were dangerous or very difficult, the boats were unloaded and carried around them.

As Fanny seated herself near the edge of the water, and as the evening breeze that swept down the cañon played with her hair and brightened her cheeks, Professor Belzoni looked at her admiringly.

"Miss Fanny," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, "you are a heroine!"

"That is only an indirect way of calling yourself a hero," rejoined Fanny.

"How so?"

"If I am a heroine, you must be a hero."

"Nothing would please me better than to play the part of the hero in a drama of which you were the heroine. You are not only a heroine in fact and on this occasion, but you are always the heroine of my life-romance. Ah! Miss Fanny, if you could know how much I love you!"

"Perhaps I do know."

"You may have guessed that I love you, but you can not



know what my love is, and I have never tried to tell you. Let me tell you now."

Fanny made no objection, and the Professor, seated by her side, poured out his passion in words so eloquent and thrilling that she could not help being moved by them.

She had heard Professor Belzoni when he addressed intelligent and appreciative audiences from the lecture-stand, she had listened to the same man of science when he conversed at ease in the parlors of the rich or in his own quiet study. She had always been charmed by his discourses and his conversation, by his calmness and self-possession, by his liquid tones and felicity of language, and by the graceful manner in which he threw a halo of beauty and interest around every subject that he touched; but she had never supposed him capable of such eloquence and feeling as he now disclosed. Professor Belzoni, the man of science, was lost in Paul Belzoni, the lover, and the transformation was a great one. It is no wonder that Fanny forgot that he was a little man, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, and inclined to baldness.

She listened with bowed head and averted eyes to his impassioned appeal, and when it ceased she turned to him and took him by the hand, looking him calmly in the face.

"Paul Belzoni," she said, "I do not doubt your love for me, and I thank you for it. It is worth more to me than I wish to tell you now. If I was looking for a husband, there is no one whom I have ever seen that I would prefer to you, for I know your true and good heart, as well as your noble mind, and I believe that your affection is such as you have declared it to be. But I am not looking for a husband; I am looking for my lost brother, Freddy. Until our task is done—until this expedition is ended—I trust that you will be silent on the subject which you have just mentioned."

"Have you nothing more to say? Have you no word of hope for me?" implored Belzoni.

"I will say this: If we succeed in our search—if we find Freddy, or any relic by which we may know that he is lost—I am willing, if you then wish it to be so, to return to New York as your wife. I can make no farther promise now."

"It is sufficient!" exclaimed the Professor, as he touched with his lips the hand that rested in his own. "I am not



more devoted to your service than I was before, but I can labor with a stronger heart and a brighter hope."

"Let us go! See! Pierre has brought the boat to the shore, above the rapids, and is beckoning to us."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### A FRIGHTENED MEXICAN.

IN a gorge on the easterly side of the Wasatch mountains, at the head of a small stream that flowed toward the south-east, Ben March and his friend Warmack had made their camp for the night.

Ben March, tall and strong and handsome as ever, was occupied in setting up the tent that he had brought with him; Jim Warmack, who was himself again when free from the pulquerias and monté-banks of the settlements, was skinning and cutting up an animal that he had killed; one of the Mexican servants was making a fire for cooking supper; and the other was attending to the horses and mules, assisted by Juan Maria Goza, a Californian whom Ben had engaged at Monterey.

When the mountaineer had finished his task, he gave the meat in charge of the Mexican at the fire, and walked around to look at the animals, returning to his friend, who had completed the arrangements of the tent.

"What is the matter with you, Jim?" asked the young gentleman, as the mountaineer took a seat by his side. "You shake your head very wisely, and you look as if something had displeased you."

"It's that Juan Maria," replied the mountaineer. "I can't make him out."

"I doubt whether it would be worth while to do so if you could. What is there about him that puzzles you?"

"He has been in a mighty strange fit ever since he found out that we meant to try to go down into the big cañon. He goes about as if he had lost more'n half his sense, and he



can't be got to step out of sight of the camp-fire arter dark. When no one is near him, he is allers mutterin' and jabberin' to himself in his own lingo, and I've a notion that he's puttin' ideas into the heads of the other Mexicans that hain't no business to be thar."

"If he is tampering with the men, he must be looked to, for we can allow nothing of that kind. What sort of ideas do you think he is putting into their heads?"

"I heard him say to Manuel, that if we stuck to our notion of goin' down into the cañon, he meant to quit us."

"Let him do so; we can get along without him."

"If he goes, he will carry off the others with him, for these Mexicans hang together like a pack of thieves."

"Quite natural, as they are thieves. I suppose we could easily get along without any of them, and they would cut a sorry figure making their way back to the coast, without any thing to carry them, and with no provisions for the way. But I do not think that I shall allow any such mutiny or attempt at mutiny."

"Then we will have a row, and we must watch our throats."

"What are you afraid of, Jim? You and I could tie those three Mexicans neck and heels, if we wished to."

"True enough, if it was in a fa'r fight; but the ways of those critturs are powerful sneakin'. It's thar style to shoot men behind thar backs, or stick knives into 'em when they're asleep."

"We must watch them, and we must find out what that fellow, Juan Maria, means. I will call him to me after supper, Jim, and will give him a talking-to."

"That's jest what I wish you would do, Mr. March. It's plain to me that the Mexican has got somethin' ag'inst that cañon, and we had better find out what the matter is, afore we git thar."

When supper was over, and the young gentleman had seated himself to smoke his pipe, in company with his friend the mountaineer, he called to him the Mexican concerning whom the discussion had been had, and that worthy made his appearance, looking decidedly like a criminal, who is summoned before a judge.



Ben March opened the subject by stating what Warmack had heard Goza say to one of his fellow-servants, with regard to leaving the party if they persisted in going to the cañon, and asked him for what reason he had made such a remark.

Juan Maria was a middle-aged man, who had doubtless once been good-looking, but his good-looks had been destroyed by intemperance and other evil habits. He was, also, one of those seedy individuals who have "seen better days," for there was an attempt at style in his velveteen calzoneras, his black glazed sombrero and his faded crimson sash, and his language was much better than that of most persons in his position.

"I think that Señor Warmack must have misunderstood me," he said, bowing low to his judge and his accuser. "It is true that I am afraid of the great cañon—as who should not be?—for it is a frightful place, and it is inhabited by many bad spirits, if the devil himself does not dwell there. I have great fears of the cañon, and I would not go near it for the world; but I have not said that I would leave the company of your excellency, or that I would break my agreement."

"Have you not spoken to Manuel and Bernardo about the cañon? Have you not tried to give them a horrible idea of it, so as to make them as afraid to venture near it as you are?"

"Madre de Dios! señor; of what do you accuse me? Did they not hear about the terrible place long before they saw me? Does not all the world know what a frightful thing it is? We have talked about it together, as was natural, but I have not tried to make them afraid of it."

"Why is it, Juan Maria, that you have such a horrible idea of the cañon? Were you ever there?"

"Yes, señor—that is, I was near it once, but I ran away as fast as I could."

"What did you see to make you afraid of it?"

"I saw nothing, for my fright was too great."

"What have you heard about it to frighten you? It is a harmless place, I think—nothing but a very deep gorge, through which the river runs."

"Ah! caballero; your excellency must pardon me if I do not attempt to tell all I have heard. Do you not know that it is a very inferno of a place, reaching down, without end, into



the bowels of the earth? What you take to be a river is nothing but a great vein of silver, which the devil has placed there to tempt us poor mortals!"

"I know that a river issues out of the mouth of the cañon. If there is such a vein of silver there, why does no one try to get out the metal?"

"Who can say how many have perished in that attempt? Your excellency must know that every vein of precious metal has its *mina-padre*—its guardian spirit—and this great vein has a thousand of them. The *mina-padres* can summon hosts of goblins, and some of these have been seen by living eyes, even near the mouth of the cañon. They are terrible dark creatures, of enormous light, and circles of fire surround them wherever they go."

"I do believe the durned crittur would skeer me a little," said Jim Warmack, "if I didn't think that I ken give a guess at the trail he is on. The Mohave Injuns, Mr. March, down near the mouth of the cañon, have got some of the tallest men among them that this child ever laid eyes on. In the winter time, too, they carry about long sticks of burning wood, which they whirl in the air to warm themselves. I reckon they do look sorter like devils in the dark."

"Very likely," replied March. "I remember hearing Professor Belzoni say that Castenada, in his account of the expedition of Coronado, who was the first white discoverer of the cañon, gives an account of a similar race of men and a similar custom. I have no doubt that all the illusions of our friend Juan Maria might be as easily dispelled."

"But there are spirits in the cañon, señor, and no one can explain away a spirit. The *mina-padres* are there, of course, to guard the silver veins."

"I make no doubt," suggested the mountaineer, "that silver or gold, and like enough both, mought be found in the cañon."

"Of course there is silver and gold there, but no man can ever get the metals. Besides the *mina-padres* and their goblins, it is full of spirits and ghosts."

"What ghosts?" suddenly asked Ben March. "Did you ever see a ghost there?"

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated the Mexican, as he shuddered



and turned pale. "But there are ghosts there—the ghosts of those who have fallen down into the cañon, tempted by the devil. Did not your excellency once lose a brother there?"

"Yes; but I have no reason to suspect the devil of having had any thing to do with it."

"It was the devil who cut the rope, and he is now tempting you with the belief that your brother is still living, so that you may go there and lose your own life."

"He will not get me so easily. I wish you, Juan Maria, if you mean to remain with us, to keep silent on the subject of the cañon, and to tell no more horrible tales to Manuel and Bernardo. Unless you are willing to do so, you must leave me now."

"I will endeavor to obey your excellency, but I am afraid that the devil has had possession of me since you first spoke of going to that inferno of a cañon, and he persecutes me by day and by night. I have fearful thoughts and horrid dreams. Even with my eyes open I see ghosts, and sometimes there comes up before me a terrible picture—a picture of an old man, with his gray hairs dabbled in blood, and a beautiful child—"

"There is some reality in this," exclaimed March, as the Mexican turned deadly pale, covered his face with his hands, and tottered back until he seemed about to fall to the ground. A cup of brandy restored him, and he went away declaring that no manner of ghosts or goblins could frighten him.

Ben March and Warmack had a conversation on the subject after Juan Maria left them, and they came to the conclusion that the man had something on his conscience that troubled him, and that caused him to "dream dreams and see visions." March was inclined to think that this cause of his terror must be connected with the great cañon or some similar place.

Juan Maria continued with them, however, keeping his fears mostly to himself, and he gave them no further trouble, except such as arose from the discovery that aguardiente was a cure for his mental disease



## CHAPTER IX.

## THE JEALOUSY OF MITO.

As the summer days rolled on, Fred March rapidly gained health and strength, until he had entirely recovered from his wounds and the effects of them—except his lapse of memory with regard to his previous life and the circumstances that had led to his descent into the cañon. He tried to remember—as if memory could possibly be a work of the will—but his vain efforts gave him pain, and he only knew that he was there, at the bottom of that tremendous abyss, with but two persons of his own race and color, and with no visible means of reaching the upper world. He knew one thing more—that he could be very happy with those two persons—or with one of them—if he could escape the torture of wondering who he was and where he came from.

He had discarded his crutch, and could walk forth as freely and boldly as any one in the ravine. He had also repaired his rifle, which had been but slightly injured by his rough descent, and he easily kept the little stone house supplied with game, which had previously been the self-imposed task of Mito.

The longer the summer days grew, the more devoted he became to Ysabel, whose rare beauty increased with every rising and setting of the sun. It seemed that she had only needed this—only the stimulus of a nature which she could love with the first love of her warm heart and passionate soul—to cause her to blossom forth into the fulness of perfect womanly beauty. The blushes on her cheeks burned more brightly; her lithe form rounded and strengthened; her dark eyes shone with a warmer light and a deeper tenderness than they had yet known.

Her father, as well as her lover, looked upon her with growing admiration, for she was the realization of what he had hoped she would one day be, when he lived in the world and was the possessor of wealth and station. But he sighed



when he reflected that he no longer had wealth and station to bestow upon a child who was so abundantly worthy of them—that he could not even place her in that world in which she was fitted to shine as one of its brightest stars.

He sighed, too, as he noticed the love—great and still growing—with which she regarded the young man who had been brought to them so wonderfully, and had been so providentially rescued from a terrible death. He sighed for both of them, for he remembered what he had told them concerning the young chief, Mito, to whom he knew the presence of Fred March could not be agreeable.

The forebodings which then filled his mind had not yet been proved true; but he felt assured that they were well founded, for he believed that the time must come when the young chief would assert what he considered his rights—when he would expel Ysabel's white lover from the cañon, or put him out of the way by some harsher means.

The old man felt this to be true, because he had long known that Mito regarded Ysabel as his property, and that it was his settled design that she should belong to him. The thought had been by no means a pleasant one to him; but he had not considered it possible that his child would ever again see one of her own people, and he knew that, in the event of his death, she could have no better or more powerful protector in that valley than Mito. He had, therefore, become somewhat resigned to the future that appeared to await her; but this young man had come, who had changed the current of his thoughts, and had inspired him with new hopes and new fears.

He was convinced that Mito was only waiting until the young man should be fully recovered, hoping that he would, of his own accord, seek to leave the cañon; or that he was inspired by pity for his weakness, and delayed the use of harsh measures until he should gain sufficient strength to be driven forth. He did not doubt, however, that when the young chief should see that Fred had become well and strong, and should also see in him a rival, who had secured the affections which he considered his own, he would then employ his power and make an end of rivalry by the use of the strong arm.



The two young people did not appear to share the fears and troubles of the old man. They were so absorbed in their love, so wrapped up in each other, that their thoughts scarcely ranged beyond the present time and its joys. They were so young, hopeful and buoyant, that they gave little heed to the future, but acted as if their present pleasures were always to endure.

Mito, the young chief, who was greatly interested in the love affairs of Fred and Ysabel, apparently paid little attention to them; but it was evident to one who observed him as closely as Señor Orteza did, that he was much troubled, and the gathering clouds showed that it could not be long before the storm would break.

His visits to the little stone house were much less frequent than they had formerly been, and he no longer had pleasant words and smiles for Ysabel when he met her. On the contrary, whenever he saw her in the company of Fred March, there was a frown on his brow, and his mutterings certainly boded no good to the young Americans.

The storm burst at last. One pleasant evening, Fred March and Ysabel had strayed up the cañon, and the young chief saw them, seated together upon a stone, gazing up at some wonderful figures that had been carved by nature on the side of the eastern cliff. They were sitting hand in hand, looking at each other fully as often as they looked at the cliff, and there was a love-light in their eyes, which could not have been caught from the rays of the declining sun.

Mito glanced at them sternly, and then, turning toward the south, strode rapidly down the cañon until he reached the little stone house.

Señor Orteza was seated in front of the door, reading a small Spanish Bible which had been in the pocket of Fred March when he was lost in the cañon. He trembled when he perceived the dark looks of his visitor, but rose and offered him his hand, inviting him to take a seat.

"My son is welcome," said he, "but why is his face so dark? Why is it that the young chief so seldom comes to my lodge?"

Mito made no response to this greeting, but seated himself on a stone, and gazed moodily up at the western sky.



"My daughter has gone to walk. Has the young chief seen her in the course of his rambles?" inquired the old man.

"I have seen her," sharply replied Mito, and his frown grew darker as he turned and faced the speaker. "I have seen her," he said, "and she was with the young stranger. He has been here a long time."

"A long time," assented Señor Orteza.

"Are his wounds cured, and is he entirely well?"

"His wounds are cured, and I believe that he is now entirely well."

"Why does he not go away? Why does he not return to his own people?"

"He does not know where his own people are. He knows nothing about them. When he received his wounds, the Great Spirit afflicted him by touching his memory, so that he remembers no part of his life up to that day."

"It is strange," muttered the Indian. "He remembers very well now."

"Besides," continued the old man, "how could he get out of this deep cañon? It is impossible to climb the cliffs, and he has no means of descending the river, even if he could go away by water."

"A way will be opened for him, as soon as he is ready to go."

"I am glad to hear it, and I have no doubt that he will gladly go. Myself and my child, also, will gladly accompany him. Open the way, Mito, I pray you, and let us go forth together. This stranger will prove a godsend to me, for he can lead me to my own people, and take care of me until I reach them."

The countenance of the Indian grew almost black with anger, and he rose to his feet and confronted the old man with a menacing gesture.

"The stranger must go, but you must not go with him," he said. "The heart of Mito has been very soft toward him. It has been too soft, but it is hardened now. I had pity upon him because he was wounded and weak, and I wished to wait until he became well and strong. His wounds are now cured, and he must go."



"Why are you so anxious to drive him forth, while you will not let me and my child go to seek our own people?"

"Father Francisco, you know what I mean," angrily replied the young chief. "Your feet used to be in the straight path, and your tongue was not crooked; but you have changed since this stranger came among us. You know that I have long worn Ysabel next to my heart, and that I have determined that she shall share my lodge. All would have gone well, and there would have been no trouble, if this young stranger had not come into the cañon. He is of her own race, and his skin is fair, and his eyes are blue, and he loves her. Do you not know this? Answer me with a straight tongue."

"I have perceived that his love has been drawn toward Ysabel," timidly replied the old man.

"You know that this is true, and you know that Ysabel loves him. You know that her heart is set upon this fair-skinned stranger, and that Mito is cast out of her thoughts. You might have prevented this, if you had tried to do so. You might have told her that those who had saved the lives of herself and her father meant to keep her among them, and that she was destined to share the lodge of a chief. You might have told the stranger that she was not for him, and that he must not look upon her with love. You would have done this, if your heart had not been turned from Mito and joined to the white man."

"It was natural and proper that my daughter should choose one of her own race and color."

"But she must not do so. The evil has already gone too far, and there is only one way to stop it now. You must tell the stranger that he is wanted here no longer, that he must leave the cañon and go forth among his own people."

"This will break my child's heart. She can never bear such a separation," thought Señor Orteza, but he did not give utterance to his thought.

"Why do you not tell him this?" he asked. "You are more interested in the matter than I am, and you know that I have no power to drive him forth from the cañon."

The Indian dropped his eyes, for he felt the shame of jealousy, which he was unwilling to betray to the man who was the object of it.



"You are the father of Ysabel," he said, "and you must do as I have told you to do. You must say to the young man what I have said to you. A way will be found for him to leave the cañon, if he is willing to go immediately. If he is not willing to go, he must be made to go, or something else will be done. I have said all that I have to say."

With these words, the young chief turned and walked away as swiftly as he had come.

While Señor Orteza was pondering this sad but not unexpected intelligence, and considering how he should break it to the young people whom it immediately concerned, he was surprised by the arrival of another visitor—no less a personage than Mohaiwe, the father of Mito.

The old chief had grown ugly in his old age, and his personal cleanliness was by no means attended to as it ought to have been; but he was a great chief, or at least so considered himself, and the old Mexican received him with marked civility.

It was a long time since Mohaiwe had shown himself at the stone house, and his appearance on this occasion, especially when the object of his visit was disclosed, satisfied Señor Orteza that Mito was desirous of sending Fred March away peacefully, if he could, and that he was thoroughly in earnest in his intention of getting rid of him at all events.

"I will speak to the young man, if it must be so," said the old man; "but this will be terrible news to my daughter. Both their hearts will be broken, if he is compelled to leave her."

"I do not know what you mean by broken hearts," grimly replied Mohaiwe. "I know that Mito wants her, and he must have her. The white man must go away or he must die."

Señor Orteza, with tears in his eyes, pleaded for the young lovers, and implored Mohaiwe to alter his determination; but the old chief was not to be moved. A savage who knew nothing about broken hearts, and who had been accustomed to purchase his wives, or to take possession of them, without consulting their inclinations, could not be expected to appreciate the sorrows that would ensue to Fred and Ysabel if they should be separated.



He reiterated his command that Fred should be sent out of the cañon, and waddled away in greasy state, leaving the old Mexican a prey to such agony as he had not experienced for years.

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## CHAPTER X.

### A FEW AGAINST MANY.

FRED MARCH and Ysabel returned from their walk, while Señor Orteza was still sitting in front of the stone house, weeping, and lamenting the evil fate that had seemed to follow him.

They came hand-in-hand, their faces radiant with love and happiness; but their joy was quickly turned to sadness when they perceived the sorrowful condition of the old man, and they hastened to ask the cause of his trouble.

With tearful eyes and trembling voice he gave an account of the visits of Mito and Mohaiwe, and made known the determination of the Indians, that Fred must leave the cañon and be separated from Ysabel.

When he had finished, Ysabel threw herself into his arms sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Can this be so?" she exclaimed. "It must not be! It is impossible! Oh, father, you do not know how I love Freddy, and he loves your Ysabel, for he has told me so."

"I know it, my child. I saw it long ago, and it troubled me, for I knew that the young chief had set his eyes upon you. I told you that the presence of Freddy was disagreeable to Mito, who did not look upon him with a favorable eye, and that I feared we would have trouble on his account. The time has now come, and he must be driven forth from the cañon, while we are to be kept here by the savages. You must be separated from your lover, Ysabel, when you have just begun to love him, and you are destined never to see the bright world that is beyond this dreary cañon."

"I could never learn to love him more, and I will not be separated from him!" exclaimed the weeping girl. "Father,



you might as well tear my heart out, as to separate me from Freddy. It will kill me if they take him from me. If you suffer this to be done, father, you will strike me dead at your feet, for I can not live away from him."

"Alas! my child; what can I do? The Indians will act as they please, and you know that I am unable to prevent them."

"So they want to drive me away," said Fred, who stood up boldly, with flashing eyes and determined look. "I had expected this, and was partly prepared for it. You may tell the red-skin, Señor Orteza, that I will not leave Ysabel of my own accord, nor will I be forced away from her."

"You will not leave me!" exclaimed Ysabel, forsaking her father's arms for those of her lover.

"I will not, mi alma! I am yours, and you are mine, until death shall claim us. Father Francisco, I love Ysabel far more than I love my life. I had rather die than be separated from her. These Indians can do no more than kill me."

"They will kill me, if they kill you," said Ysabel. "I would sooner die than be joined to Mito or any of his race. Freddy is my life, and I can not live without him."

"Let us, then, die together, my children," solemnly said Señor Orteza, rising and folding his arms about the young people.

A period of silence followed, broken only by the sobs of Ysabel and her father. The young American maintained his composure and his determined air.

"Come, now," he said, when the emotion of the other two had somewhat subsided; "let us talk of this matter calmly. Something must be done, and done quickly. Is it not possible to escape, Father Francisco? You and Ysabel could not climb the cliff, even if it might be possible for me to do so; but there must be some way of exit. How do the Indians get down to the mouth of the cañon?"

"They go in skin canoes, I think—such as they can easily carry around the rapids and other dangerous places."

"We have skins in the house, and I think I could make such a boat," said Fred, who felt the quick invention that is born of desperate emergencies.

"But we could never descend the river. We know nothing



of the currents and the rapids, and the Indians could overtake us before we had gone a day's journey. Besides, it would take time to make a canoe, and we have no time, for our decision must be made immediately."

"Let us, then, decide immediately. For my part, I have already decided. This stone house is strong, and it can easily be made stronger. We have two rifles, and two pistols, including my broken one, which I have nearly repaired. We are within reach of water, and we have a good supply of dried meat on hand. To-night I will procure the materials for making a boat, and I think we can stand a siege here until I finish it. Then we must trust to Providence to enable us to slip out some dark night, and to guard us from sunken rocks and rapids while we float down the river."

"Señor March, you are a hero!" exclaimed the old man. "You must surely be an American."

Ysabel again threw herself into the arms of her lover, and praised him rapturously. It seemed to her childlike mind that all difficulties were at an end, that their escape was already accomplished.

To Señor Orteza the prospect appeared by no means so brilliant, and he shook his head gloomily.

"We could at least take some revenge upon our enemies before we died," he said. "They would soon overcome us, for you are not a sufficient garrison for our little fort, though I still can fire a gun or a pistol. The great trouble is, that we have no ammunition."

"You have plenty of powder, I am sure."

"That is true, but there are not a dozen bullets in the house."

"Do you suppose that the Indians have any?"

"It is very likely that they have."

"Then the difficulty will soon disappear. I will visit Mito in the morning."

"For what purpose?"

"I will tell him that I have concluded to obey his command and leave the cañon, and will ask him to give me bullets, with which to kill game for food on the way. It will not be telling him the truth, but the case is a desperate one."

"It is indeed, but you seem to make nothing of the



obstacles. The Indians will be so angry, when they learn how they have been deceived, that they will kill us all."

"Let them do so, if we can not prevent them. Ysabel and I will die if we are separated, and is it not better to die together?"

"You speak truly, and you make my old heart ashamed of its weakness. The will of God be done, and may the saints protect us! Show us what we can do, and we will go to work."

Fred showed the old man how to build up and strengthen the wall that inclosed the yard in front of the stone house, and worked with him until night closed down upon the cañon.

Leaving Señor Orteza and Ysabel laboring with all their might at the wall, he then went out to gather materials for making the frame of his boat, and returned in the course of two hours, with a number of stout and flexible rods, which he declared would answer his purpose admirably.

He found the delicate hands of Ysabel badly bruised and torn by handling the rough stones, although they had been covered by deerskin gloves, and he directed her to stop and rest, a command which she received with a rebellious pout.

"If you will not let me work, I can cook something for you to eat," she said, as she hastened to prepare supper.

Fred March, as cheerful and stout-hearted as if he was making a home for his bride, assisted Señor Orteza to build the wall higher, and to make the openings through which they could fire their guns and pistols.

By the time Ysabel had their supper ready—near the middle of the night—they had quite a tall and substantial barricade, instead of the low stone wall by which the little yard had previously been inclosed.

After supper, Fred made the old man lie down to take some rest, while he proceeded to prepare the frame of his boat. He also wished Ysabel to go to her rest, but she would not obey him, and remained with him at his work, holding the light and helping him as he bent his rods into proper shapes and bound them firmly together with leather thongs. The work went on briskly, for they cheered and enlivened each other, in spite of the very unfavorable circumstances by which they were surrounded, and when daylight stole down into the cañon, Fred had the frame of his boat nearly completed.



When all had partaken of a substantial breakfast, Fred persuaded Ysabel to try to get some sleep during his absence, as he was going to visit Mito for the purpose of getting a supply of bullets. When he went, he left Señor Orteza at work on the opening in the rock that led to the river, enlarging it so that there might be no danger of falling short of water.

The young gentleman soon returned, more light-hearted and happy than ever, for his visit had been an entire success.

He reported that his apparently ready compliance with the demands of the young chief, had put Mito in such an excellent humor, that he had filled the pockets of his hunting-shirt with bullets, giving him, in fact, all he had in his lodge. He told Fred that he would prepare a canoe for his voyage down the river, and would be at the stone house at about noon, in order to see him set off on his journey, although he did not intend to accompany him, but to send him to the mouth of the cañon in charge of two Indians.

Having taken care of the ammunition, and having loaded the rifles and pistols, Fred set to work to finish the frame of his boat, to fasten on the gunwales, and to put in soak the hides with which he intended to cover it. In this work he was assisted by Ysabel, who had become wakeful as soon as he returned to the house.

Señor Orteza occupied himself in strengthening the barricade, until nearly noon, when he mounted it, for the purpose of acting as sentinel, and giving warning if the young chief should make his appearance.

He had not been there long, when Mito came in sight, accompanied by two tall Indians. The old man descended and notified Fred, according to a previous arrangement, when the latter climbed up and took his place on the stones.

He suffered the Indians to approach until they came within easy hailing distance, when he ordered them to halt, and asked them what they wanted.

"We want you," replied Mito, as he stopped, with an air of great surprise. "We have come to take you down the river, as we promised to do."

"You may return, for I am not going."

"What do you mean? You said that you were ready to



go, and I gave you my bullets, and I have brought a cañon for you. Is your tongue straight, or have you lied like a white man?"

"My tongue is as straight as an arrow now, when I say that I do not mean to go. I tell you, red-skin, that you and all your tribe are not enough to drive me away from Ysabel. If I must die, I will die by her side. I am willing to leave the cañon with Ysabel and her father, if you will let us go in peace, but you can not separate me from her."

"The Great Spirit has taken away your mind. You do not know what you are saying. Where is Father Francisco?"

"He is here, and he tells me to speak for him. He tells me to say that he had rather see his child dead at his feet, than see her taken away to share the lodge of a red-skin."

"Your scalp shall dry in my lodge for this, you lying white dog!" exclaimed Mito, who was now thoroughly enraged. "You will all be slain. I will bring my warriors, and we will crush you in a moment."

"If you want us, you must come and take us. I have nothing more to say, except that you must not come a step nearer, or I will send a bullet through you."

The young man emphasized this threat by pointing his rifle over the barricade.

Mito counseled for a few moments with his companions, who pointed to the newly-raised fortification, and then all three turned and walked away, after a few threatening gestures toward the white man.

"We are in for it now," muttered Fred, as he descended into the yard. "Come, Ysabel, let us have some dinner as soon as possible, mi querida, for they will come back before long, and it may be a long while before we are able to eat again."

Ysabel, who was always cheerful when her lover was in good spirits, blithely prepared the midday meal, which was quickly eaten by the little garrison, who then, after a prayer by the old man, prepared for the expected conflict.

In the course of an hour the arrival of Mito was again reported, and this time he came accompanied by about twenty warriors, a few of whom carried rifles or fusees, but the greater part were armed with bows and arrows.

He summoned the garrison to surrender; but Fred, who



had taken upon himself the office of commander-in-chief, returned such a defiant answer, that it immediately provoked a volley of bullets and arrows.

It was well for the little garrison that the Mohaves of the cañon, although so tall and strong, were not a warlike people, or they would have been crushed in a moment, as Mito had threatened, notwithstanding the confident bravado of Fred March. But these Indians lived in peace together, with no fierce neighbors to make aggressions upon them; consequently, they were unused to the combats and stratagems of war, and were shy of encountering deadly missiles.

With savage yells they rushed toward the stone house in formidable array; but Fred and the old Mexican sent two well-aimed bullets among them, and about half of them turned back. The pistols hid two others low, when they came near the barricade, and the rest, seeing how high and strong it was, turned and fled back to their comrades. Having gained a safe distance, they concealed themselves behind rocks and in holes, from which they kept up a constant but harmless fire upon the barricade. Their numbers, in the mean time, were gradually augmented by new arrivals, until nearly fifty could be counted, and among them could be seen the fat and dirty form of old Mohaiwe, who seemed to be wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement and indignation.

As the shades of evening began to gather over the cañon, Fred descended from the barricade, leaving Ysabel to watch the enemy at an embrasure.

"We have come off, so far, better than I had expected," said he. "I notice that they have ceased firing their guns. Do you suppose, Father Francisco, that they can be out of ammunition?"

"I think it very likely. Mito told me, several days ago, that his people had but little powder left, and that which I have in the house was made for them."

"That adds to the odds in our favor. I suppose they will make a great attack to-night. If we can beat them off then, I shall feel quite hopeful."

"Do you not think that they can surround us so as to prevent our escape, and thus starve us out?"



"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. We are doing very well now. Have you not heard firing down the river?"

"Yes. What can it mean?"

"I do not know. Hark! Did you hear that yell over by the western cliff? It sounded like the cry of some poor wretch in his last agony."

"It is very strange. What is Ysabel pointing at?"

"Some of the red-skins are coming nearer. I will give them a shot to teach them to keep their distance."

Leveling his rifle through an embrasure, the young man took a careful aim and fired. Loud yells followed the shot, as old Mohaiwe staggered and fell to the ground.

Fred sprang up on the barricade, waved his hat, and gave vent, at the top of his voice, to a real American hurrah!

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WILL AND THE WAY.

As the early rays of the rising sun lighted up the sky above the great cañon, Fanny March and Professor Belzoni, with their party, who had passed the night at the head of a chain of dangerous rapids, proposed to renew their adventurous journey.

Their skin boats, which were hauled up on the shore every night, and sometimes during the day, for the purpose of preventing them from becoming water-soaked and rotten, were launched on the broad river, which was smooth but swift above the rapids. The boats were loaded with the provisions and baggage, and the voyagers again set forth with hopeful hearts, and with strong reliance on the Providence that had sustained and brought them thus far.

When the sun showed his broad face over the cañon, and poured a flood of light down into its dark recesses, he found them skirting along the base of the precipice, whither they had gone in order to keep out of the strong current.

As they turned a point of rock, and shot out into the



stream again, a view of such surprising grandeur and magnificence burst upon them that the rowers dropped their oars, and all gave utterance to simultaneous exclamations of wonder and delight.

The western wall of the cañon, at this place, had been fashioned into strange and fantastic forms, the rocks having probably been worn by the action of the water when the river burst its way through the immense mountain range. Just before the gaze of the voyagers, the cliffs assumed the shape of a city in the air, with huge battlements, tall towers, many-angled roofs, lofty spires and graceful crosses and minarets. Over all and into all was poured the full effulgence of the morning sun, shining through a thin veil of mist, flooding the whole with glory, and almost affording a realization of the apostolic dream of the heavenly city, for it glowed like the sunset pictures we sometimes see of cities in the clouds:

"With dome and spire and pinnacle,  
Their lofty summits gilded well  
With gold from heaven's crucible."

"It is wonderful," said Professor Belzoni, when the boatmen at last resumed their oars.

"Its beauty is beyond the power of words," responded Fanny.

"I hope this scene is a good omen—that its brightness foretells the success of our enterprise."

"I almost believe it does. Our voyage has been wonderfully prosperous thus far. Is it not strange that we have seen no Indians?—that we have been molested by no enemies? If there are any in the cañon, we ought to have met some of them before this time. I am inclined to believe that you were mistaken, Professor, in saying that this gorge is inhabited."

"Either it is inhabited, or wandering Mohaves ascend it and pass much of their time in it. Big John says that it is inhabited."

"He is right. Do you see that Indian standing near the pointed rock on the shore yonder? With his long spear in his hand, with his fanciful head-dress, and with the sunshine lighting up his form, he looks as if he might be a messenger



who had just descended from that golden city on the cliff."

"He is a Mohave, without doubt, and he is making signs of friendship. Pierre, turn the boat in toward the shore and let us speak to him."

The boats were headed for the western shore, the Indian remaining stationary while they approached him. When they were near enough he was hailed, and a conversation was opened with him, Big John acting as interpreter.

He asked who the strangers were and where they were going, and was told that they were Americans who were exploring the cañon for their own pleasure, and looking for a white man who had been lost there the previous year.

"There are no white men in the cañon, and none are wanted here," replied the Indian. "You must turn back, and go down the river to the place you came from."

Professor Belzoni thought that this was rather a peremptory command to be issued by one Indian, and he directed Big John to ask the Mohave the reason of it.

"Because this cañon is our home, and we own it," was the reply. "We allow no white men or other strangers to intrude upon it. Mohaiwe, the chief of our tribe, has heard of your coming, and he sent me down here to meet you and tell you this. He does not wish to harm you, but has told me to give you this warning, so that you may return in peace, for he will not let you go up the river any further."

"It seems to me," said Fanny March, "that if this chief was confident of his power to stop us, he would have commenced with blows instead of words, for that is generally the Indian fashion. Tell the Indian to say to his chief that we thank him for his warning, but are not to be hindered by it; that we are determined to go up the cañon as far as we wish to, and that we expect soon to pay him a visit."

Big John translated the message of the young lady to the Indian, who, after a little more expostulation, turned and disappeared among the rocks.

The boats were again headed out into the stream, and pointed up the cañon.

At noon the voyagers stopped at a little sandy beach under a hollow in the cliff, where an attack was impossible, except



from the river. Here they hauled up their boats, and prepared their noontide meal in entire security.

After dinner they continued their course up the stream, without encountering any obstruction or molestation, until about the middle of the afternoon, when they drew near some difficult rapids, at the foot of which they would be obliged to land and unload the boats for a portage.

Fanny was congratulating her friends on the fact that no enemies were in sight to oppose them at the portage, and priding herself on her sagacity in discovering that the Mohaves were too weak to resist them, when the Canadian shook his head, and pointed to the shore, where a tall Indian had just risen up from behind a rock.

Another and another made his appearance, until the voyagers perceived that they were confronted by quite a formidable force, who seemed determined to attack them or prevent them from landing.

Pierre Narbois now assumed command of the party, and directed the boats to be rowed in to the shore, at a point a little distance below the place where the Indians were waiting. He landed them near some rocks, which might serve as a cover, in case the Indians should attack.

They reached the rocks before their opponents could get near, and the Canadian, Professor Belzoni and Big John instantly sprung ashore with their rifles in their hands. Having placed Fanny March in a safe position, they awaited the onset.

The Indians came forward with evident apprehension, making signs of amity. Soon two of their number, one of whom was the emissary who had met our party in the morning—separated from the rest and approached the white men. Big John hailed them, and asked them what they wanted.

The messenger answered by repeating the language which he had previously used, warning the party against attempting to proceed further, and commanding them to return immediately to their boats and make the best of their way down the river.

Big John replied, as the Professor directed him to, that they were determined to go on, and that nothing should hinder them. He also assured the Mohaves, that unless they



dispersed and left the passage clear, they would be fired upon and compelled to do so.

At this the Indians raised a shout, and commenced an irregular fire of bullets and arrows; but they soon scattered and sought cover when their fire was effectively returned by the white men and Big John, who showed no disposition to abandon his allies.

After half an hour of this sort of warfare, the firing gradually slackened on the part of the Indians, and their numbers ceased entirely, and it was evident that they had suffered severely. The white men ceased their work, and allowed their weapons to cool.

"Considering that this is the first battle I was ever engaged in, I have been remarkably comfortable," said Fanny. "If all Indian fighting is as easy as this, the frontier men must be great braggarts."

"These fellows are not used to war," replied the Professor, "or they have exhausted their ammunition, and do not like to face our rifles when they have nothing but bows and arrows."

"*Sacré enfant de Garce!*" exclaimed the Canadian. "Dese Mohaves are all rascaille cowards. We can wheep 'em wize-out guns. Let us go out and fight 'em in ze open."

"We will do that in a very short time, unless they go away."

Big John reported that his two countrymen had deserted during the fight, and joined the Mohaves; but they had fortunately been supplied with no weapons, and in a little while they came sneaking back, declaring that their "cousins" were a cowardly set of fellows, with whom they would have nothing to do. Big John gave them a severe lecture, after which he left them in charge of the boats, assuring Belzoni that they would not again attempt to desert.

"There must be some sort of a battle beyond us, farther up the cañon," said Fanny, who had been listening attentively. "I have distinctly heard firing and shouting in that direction for some time. Have you noticed it?"

"I have," answered Belzoni. "Something of the kind is going on there, no doubt. Perhaps the Indians have an enemy in their rear, and it is for that reason they do not attack



us more vigorously. Suppose we sally out now, Pierre, and try to drive them away."

As the Canadian and Big John were both ready for this move, they rushed out from behind the rocks, with their rifles in their hands and their pistols in their belts, yelling and firing as they went.

The Indians, startled by this unexpected attack, broke out from their covers and ran up the cañon, after firing a few harmless arrows.

The white men pursued them until they were nearly out of breath, when they stopped to look after Fanny, who was not far behind them.

"I am the only sufferer, Belzoni," she said, as she came up. "An arrow has gone through my dress and wounded it severely. What has become of our enemies? Hark! What can that be?"

A terrific yell, wild, shrill, piercing and prolonged, echoed through the cañon. While Fanny and her companion waited in awe and amazement, wondering what would happen next, a single rifle-shot was heard, followed by an exultant hurrah.

"As sure as the eagle of the republic lives," exclaimed Belzoni, "that shout came from an American throat! Something tells me that we have heard the voice of Freddy March! Fanny, from this hour you are mine!"

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## CHAPTER XII.

### FATE OF THE GHOST-SEER.

"Here we will rest and pass the night," said Ben March, throwing himself down on the flat rock. "I must confess that I am tired, and those Mexicans are perfectly used up."

The spot which he and his party had reached was a broad ledge of rock, reaching out, like a shelf, from the western side of the cañon, and fully two-thirds of the way from the top. Their descent of the almost precipitous cliffs was truly wonderful, and had only been accomplished by infinite labor



attended by continual perils. A portion of the means employed was visible in the shape of a long ladder of ropes, that hung down the side of the cliff, from a projecting point far above their heads.

"We will have to leave that article hanging there, for the buzzards to wonder at," continued March, looking wistfully up at the ladder. "I don't know how we are going to get along without it, but it is impossible to bring it down."

"I ain't so sure about that, Mr. March," replied Jim Warrmack, as he squinted up the cliff. "I reckon I ken do the job."

"Do you know what you are saying? Perhaps you mean to send a Mexican up there, to cut it and fall down with it."

"Not adzackly. It hangs by the upper cross-piece of rope, jist as we left it, and—I don't know, but I think I hev made a closer shot than that in my time."

"Do you mean to try to shoot it down?"

"That's my notion. Jest you stand up here, Mr. March, if you please, and stand steady, so that I ken git a good rest on your shoulder. It's growin' kinder dark, but a bit of light shines on that cross-piece, and I allow that I ought to fetch it."

The mountaineer aimed carefully, and fired, but the ladder remained motionless.

"You have not touched it!" exclaimed Ben March.

"It wouldn't do to bet too high on that, sir. Take a pull at the rope, and see how it feels. Stand from under!"

As Ben touched the ladder, it fell off from the point of rock on which it had hung, and came rattling down upon the ledge, so that the mountaineer's warning was timely, for he jumped back just in time to escape the descending mass. The bullet had nearly cut in two the rope by which it had been held.

When the young gentleman had sufficiently commended the fine shooting of his friend, and fully examined its effects, he pronounced himself hungry.

"We will have to put up with a cold supper and a dry one," said he; "for there is neither wood nor water to be had in this place. But we have succeeded so well in climbing down into this terrible cañon, that we ought not to grumble



at a little hard fare. What is the matter with you, Juan Maria?"

"Por el amor de Dios, señor, un pedazo de aguardiente. —For the love of God, a bit of brandy"—whined the unfortunate Mexican, whose fiery nose showed that his terror of ghosts and goblins had become a chronic disease, requiring frequent applications of brandy to keep his courage up.

"What can be the matter with you now?" angrily demanded Ben March. "We have come more than half-way down into the cañon, and have seen no ghosts or spirits, and we know that there are none to be seen. They are all in your eye, Señor Goza."

"But I have seen them, your excellency, and I see them all the time. They follow me wherever I go. The further down we get into this horrible cañon, the more they crowd about me and frighten me. En el nombre de Dios, un pedazo de aguardiente!"

"If you would drink less aguardiente, and would say your prayers more frequently, it would be better for you. I am tired of your ghost-seeing, and of your continual drain upon my brandy-flask."

"I often call upon the most holy mother of God, señor, but she gives me no relief. By night and by day, I see spirits and shapes of the dead. They look into me with their cold eyes until my heart freezes, and I would die if I did not have a little brandy to warm me. To-night I know that I shall see them. They will come to me in crowds, and among them will come the old man with his gray hair streaked with blood, and the beautiful child, and—and—"

"Hand him the brandy-flask, Jim," said March. "Be quick about it, or he will have the vertigo again. That man's conscience must trouble him fearfully."

Juan Maria swallowed a large dose of brandy and forgot to return the flask. He soon fell asleep, without waiting for his supper, and snored loud enough to scare a legion of goblins.

The next afternoon Ben March, usually so calm and impassive, was in an extreme state of excitement and exultation, for he had almost attained the light—or the depth—of his ambition—he had nearly reached the bottom of the great cañon.



It was true that he was still at no easy distance from the mass of stones and rubbish, the *débris* of centuries, that had collected at the base of the cliff; but he and Warmack had concluded that if they should join all their ladders together, they might be able to reach the bottom from where they stood. If this plan should not prove feasible, there was another route which might be easier, the only difficulty being that there was a broad and deep chasm between them and the point from which it would be necessary to start.

They were, therefore, quite joyful and exhilarated. In fact, the lower their bodies descended, the higher their spirits rose, and it was to be supposed that, by the time they reached the bottom of the cañon, their hearts would be in the clouds.

They were on a ledge similar to that on which they had rested the night before, except that it was less extensive. Below them was the bed of the cañon, a rugged mass of broken rocks, with here and there a green spot, with the river in the middle, dashing over rapids, and at one place thundering over a considerable fall with a continuous roar. Before them the lofty cliffs of the opposite wall towered up into the clouds, as it seemed, and behind them the dark masses of rock which they had descended arose unendingly, looking as if they might topple down at any moment and crush them.

Ben March and Warmack commenced the preparations for their further descent with light hearts and cheerful anticipations, for they were now sanguine of getting to the bottom of the cañon, although they knew that they would not be able to return by the way they had come. That, however, was a subject for future consideration. Their attention was so occupied by the obstacles immediately in their path, that they had no time to think of such as lay beyond.

They had brought a good stock of ropes and rope ladders from the coast, Ben March having fitted out the expedition regardless of expense; but they had only two ladders remaining, the others having been left hanging at inaccessible points from which they had descended.

These two they directed Juan Maria to fasten together securely, while they prepared the ropes for letting down their provisions and other baggage.

The ladders were then lowered over the ledge, the upper



end being secured to a rock, and Jim Warmack went down to try them and see whether they were near enough to the bottom to permit a descent.

He had hardly touched the lower ladder, when it slipped loose from the other, and fell down to the base of the cliff. He returned to the ledge, and reported this untoward circumstance, abusing Juan Maria for his carelessness in tying the ropes.

The Mexican, however, with tears in his eyes, protested that he had never tied better knots, and that they had undoubtedly been loosed by the evil spirits that abounded in the cañon.

"I do believe the durned greaser is goin' crazy," said the mountaineer. "He looks as wild as a wolf in winter time. It won't do to trust him with any thing."

"There is no use in crying over spilled milk," said Ben. "All we have to do now is to try the other route, and I believe it is the best one, after all. Let us go and examine it."

He then walked with his friend to the chasm, which was on the south side of the ledge, and extended back to a perpendicular wall of rock. On the other side, a little distance below, the wall of the cañon sloped away toward the bottom, so that they might be able to scramble down over the rocks and loose stones. This gulf, however, was more than fifty feet wide, though it narrowed a little at the upper end.

After a careful examination, the mountaineer discovered a pointed rock on the other side, which stood up like a horn, the point inclined toward the south. If a rope could be made fast to that horn, the chasm might easily be bridged.

Manuel was called, and required to show his dexterity in the use of the lasso, on which, as a native of California, he greatly prided himself. On the second trial he threw his noose over the horn, and drew it tight.

The three men then pulled on the rope with all their strength, until they were satisfied that it and the rock were firm, when they secured the loose end on their side of the chasm, and Ben March went over on the rope, carrying the remaining ladder. Thus a passable bridge was formed, and Manuel was set at work to carry over the baggage.

Hardly was the bridge finished, when they were surprised



by the sound of distant firing and shouting, which seemed to come from some point lower down the cañon. Ben March took his spy-glass, and with it swept the cañon toward the south, until he suddenly steadied it, with an exclamation of wonder.

"There are Indians down there," said he, "and they are fighting among themselves, for I can see them running to cover and firing from behind the rocks with guns and bows. This is a strange place that we have come into, but I would not have supposed that it was inhabited. What can they be firing at? Ah! I see! There is something like a hut, Jim, built against a large rock near the river-side. There is a pile of stones, at least, with a high wall around it, and the answering shots come from there. As I live, I believe I saw a white man on the wall, but he is out of sight now. Take the glass, Jim, and tell me what you can see."

The mountaineer looked, and reported that he could see what his friend had seen, and nothing more, except that there was no white man in sight, and that there were indications of fighting further down the river.

Juan Maria came up, trembling with excitement, and asked to be allowed to look through the glass. It was handed to him, and the two Americans retired to consult concerning this new development.

"I've a notion that I would like to take a hand in that scrimmage, somehow," said Warmack. "Don't you reckon, Mr. March, that we had better hurry down thar and see what is goin' on?"

"Just what I was about to propose."

The Mexican stood on the extreme verge of the ledge, with the spy-glass at his eye. Suddenly he dropped it, and uttered a shriek of terror.

"I see them!" he shouted. "They are crowding about me now, and the air is full of them! I see the old man with his gray hairs, but where is the beautiful child?"

With a wild and piercing scream, like the last cry of a lost soul, he sprung up into the air and fell back upon the flat rock, his limbs quivering and his whole body shaking.

The two Americans rushed forward to pick him up, but they were too late. He had already rolled over the edge of



the precipice, and they shuddered as they heard him dashing down to the bottom.

"'Thar's an end of his ghost-seein' now," muttered War-mack.

"He is gone, and we can do nothing for him. His evil conscience, no doubt, aided by my brandy, has driven him to destruction. What's that? Did you hear that shout, Jim?"

"Yes, sir. If that warn't a white man's yell, may I never see old Missouri ag'in."

"It sounded like a real Yankee hurrah, as sure as I live! Perhaps some white men have straggled into the valley, and the Indians have set upon them. Suppose Freddy should be one of them!"

"What an idea, Mr. March! Wal, thar's a chance, as I said afore. Let's hurry down thar, and take a hand in the scrimmage."

"Lead on; I am ready."

The two Americans picked their way over the bridge of ropes, and hastily scrambled down the side of the cañon, leaving Manuel to take care of their packs and to look after the body of his countryman.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

BEN MARCH and the mountaineer were in such a hurry to get to the bottom of the cañon, that they found themselves considerably bruised and worsted by their scramble, when they reached the base of the cliff. Paying no attention to wounds and bruises, however, they hastened on toward the river, in the direction in which they supposed the fighting to be.

The shouting seemed to increase, and the firing also increased, after a while. It seemed to the two friends that the combat had taken a new turn, and that more were engaged



in it, or those already engaged had become more animated in the contest.

Spurred on by curiosity and by eagerness to mingle in the fray, they went at their best pace, running over rocks, across gullies, and down precipitous descents, until they were compelled to pause to take breath.

Finding themselves, as near as they could judge by the sounds they heard, but a short distance from the scene of the conflict, they picked their way more carefully, keeping under cover as much as possible, and making a circuit for the purpose of avoiding the savages, and of getting in the vicinity of the stone wall, behind which they supposed the white men to be, if there were really any in the cañon.

The shades of evening were settling down into the great ravine, but a pleasant twilight prevailed, which usually lasted there a long time.

As March and Warmack came out from behind a large rock near the river, the mountaineer seized the arm of his friend, and pointed to some figures that were crouched behind a pile of stones.

The figures were those of three men and a woman, as it seemed, and the men were leisurely firing at the Indians whenever they showed themselves. A closer examination satisfied Ben March that they were white men, and he advanced and spoke to them.

The next moment he found himself shaking hands with Professor Belzoni, and staring, in silent surprise, at his sister Fanny; for his astonishment at her appearance was so great, that it rendered him, for a few moments, entirely speechless.

"I am heartily glad to meet you, Professor," he said, as soon as he was able to speak. "This meeting is the most wonderful circumstance that I have yet witnessed in this region of wonders, and I can hardly realize it."

"It is, indeed, a most fortunate meeting. But why do you not greet your sister?"

"Is this really you, Fanny? You are strangely transformed, from a New York belle into a ranger of the wilderness. Where did you come from, and how did you get here?"

"I might better ask, how did you get here?—but we have



no time for questions or answers. Ben, I believe that brother Fred is behind that stone wall which the Indians are attacking. He must have friends with him, and we have come just in time to help them."

"Freddy here, and alive! I know you would not say so, Fanny, unless you had reason to believe it. Let us make a dash, Professor, and drive away the red-skins. I know we can scatter them, for I have the strength of ten men in me at this moment."

Pierre Narbois—who had found an old friend in Jim Warrmack, and had directed him to watch the left, where the Mohaves appeared to be endeavoring to flank the party of whites—seconded the suggestion, and Big John was also in favor of it. It was agreed that they should sally out on the left, and attack the flanking party, driving them in upon the main body, among whom a panic might thus be produced.

"What will we do with Fanny?" inquired Ben.

"Don't trouble yourself about me," replied the young lady. "I am a warrior too, and have already been wounded in one engagement."

"Wounded, Fanny?"

"Yes, sir—severely wounded in the skirt of my dress; but I hope to survive it. Lead on; I will be safe enough behind your big body."

Ben March and the mountaineer took the lead. They fell like a thunderbolt on the party of Indians who were stealing around under cover of the rocks for the purpose of striking them on the flank. These they quickly routed, and sent them flying back to their friends, in the greatest terror and confusion. Aided by the panic which was thus occasioned, the white men advanced against the main body of the Mohaves, and attacked them vigorously. The Indians, who had nothing but bows and arrows left to fight with, and who were astonished and terrified at finding foes in their front and on their flank, soon gave way before their formidable assaults, and were driven from every position they occupied, until none were left in the vicinity.

The victors then turned their attention to the stone house, and hastened to make the acquaintance of those whom they had rescued.



Ben March was the first over the wall, and he had the satisfaction of clasping in his arms his brother Fred, whom he greeted as one risen from the dead, and upon whom he lavished the most endearing caresses. He soon noticed, however, that his brother did not return his caresses, but received his greetings coldly, though joyfully.

"We are right glad to see you, strangers," said Fred. "We were in what might be called a tight place here, and had nearly made up our minds to die; but you came just in time to save us. Where on earth did you drop from?"

"Strangers!" exclaimed Ben, in a tone of sorrowful surprise. "What do you mean, Freddy March? Don't you know your brother Ben?"

"Do you call your own sister a stranger?" asked Fanny.

"Have you forgotten Professor Belzoni?" inquired the man of science.

"I hope you remember me, boy," said rough Jim Warrmack.

"If you are really my relatives and friends," replied Fred, "I am glad of it, for I have been very anxious to know who I am and where I came from; but you will pardon me, I hope, when I say that I have no recollection of ever having seen one of you before this hour."

"Freddy—my own brother Freddy!—you will break my heart," exclaimed Ben. "Is it possible that you have forgotten us all so soon?"

"Señor Orteza will tell you that my brain must have been injured by the hurts that I had received when he found me at the foot of the cliff yonder; for I have no remembrance of any portion of my life previous to that time."

"It is true, señores," said the old Mexican. "The loss of his memory has afflicted him greatly, and I am afraid that he will never recover it. When I found him, I asked him many questions, but he could only answer one word—Freddy."

"It is very sorrowful," said Fanny; "but we are glad enough to find him alive, and I hope that he will learn to love us, although he has forgotten us."

"Who is this?" she continued, glancing at Ysabel.

"This is my Ysabel," replied Fred, drawing the blushing girl close to him.



"If she is your Ysabel, she is my Ysabel, too, and I shall love her very dearly."

As the Indians did not make another attack, but appeared to have abandoned the vicinity, there was time for explanations, which were made briefly and satisfactorily. Señor Orteza related all that had happened to Fred, as far as he knew, and Ben and the Professor recounted the journeyings of their respective parties, detailing how they had made their way into the cañon.

"I heard a terrible yell a little while before you came," said Fred. "It seemed to proceed from the west side of the cañon, and it was very startling. Do you know any thing about it?"

"I heard it, too," said Fanny. "It sounded like the shriek of some person in extreme agony. Does anybody know what it was?"

"That yell came from one of my Mexicans," replied Ben. "He had been seeing too many ghosts and drinking too much brandy, and the consequence was that he fell over the cliff in a fit, at our last stopping-place. By the way, Warmack, we ought to send out a party to pick him up and to look after Manuel. I have no doubt that the fellow was a great rascal, but we must give him a Christian burial."

All the men, with the exception of Señor Orteza and Fred, formed the party that went out for this purpose, and all went armed, in order to guard against the attacks of any Indians that might be lurking in the vicinity.

To the great surprise of Ben March, Juan Maria was found to be still breathing, although life was nearly extinct. Manuel had discovered him in the thick branches of a cedar tree, where he had lodged, and had detached him and lowered him to the ground with considerable difficulty. As he was able to do nothing more, he sat by the side of his insensible countryman, saying all the prayers he could think of, and calling upon all the saints whose names he could remember.

A litter was soon formed, upon which the body of Juan was laid and covered with branches, and the party returned with it to the stone house, also carrying with them the packs which Manuel had succeeded in bringing down to the base of the cliff.



The latter was carried into the yard, and laid on the ground. Professor Belzeni then took the same party, with the exception of Ben March, and went down to the foot of the rapids below the falls, to bring up the baggage that belonged to his expedition, and to take care of the boats.

When the branches were removed from the body of Juan Maria, Señor Orteza approached it, and examined it with an appearance of intense interest.

"Surely those features are familiar to me," he said. "Can it be the same man? Is it possible that we have thus met, after so many years? Who is this man, Señor March? Where did he come from?"

"I picked him up in Monterey," replied Ben, "and his name is Juan Maria Goza."

"Ave Maria purissima! It is my guilty but unfortunate nephew—the same who thought he had doomed my child and myself to a terrible death, by throwing us from the top of yonder awful precipice. But, he is not entirely dead, gentlemen. His pulse throbs a little. Let us try to recover him. It may be for the good of his soul to speak one word before he dies."

Acting on this humane suggestion, the old man endeavored, by the use of water and stimulants, to call back the nearly parted spirit of the poor wretch, and soon had the satisfaction of hearing him gasp for breath, and of seeing him open his eyes.

The first object upon which the gaze of Juan Maria rested was the venerable countenance of Señor Orteza, with his snow-white hair and beard. He shuddered with terror, and immediately closed his eyes to shut out the sight.

"Be not afraid, Juan Maria," said the compassionate old man. "It is really I, your uncle Francisco."

"It can not be. Where am I? Is this hell? Have you been sent here to torture me? I murdered my kind old uncle. I threw him down into that terrible cañon—him and the sweet little Ysabel—and ever since that hour the devil has been driving me toward it, and now I am lost in it forever."

"You did not kill me, my nephew. I was saved by a miracle, and I am here, alive and well."

"Can this be true? Was the child saved? Where is she?"



"Come hither, Ysabel, and look at your cousin."

Ysabel tremblingly approached, and shuddered with fear as she beheld the mangled form and distorted features of the miserable wretch; but he was moved in a different manner, and almost smiled as he saw this beautiful vision.

"It is one of the angels of heaven!" he exclaimed. "It is the face that I have seen in my waking hours, as well as when I slept. You are alive, uncle Francisco, and you are blest; but I am lost eternally, for the sin of murder rests upon me."

"Say not so, Juan Maria. There is always mercy for the repentant. Call upon the blessed Virgin to pray for you."

"I am a wretch, beyond the reach of prayers. I tried to kill you, uncle—you and Ysabel—that all your possessions might be mine; but, the deed was a cursed one, and the curse has followed me. Nothing has prospered with me, but my life has been full of horror and wretchedness. I could not get your lands, for they would not give them to me until I should *prove* your death and the manner of it, and that I did not dare to do. The money and goods were wasted long ago, but the lands remain for you and Ysabel."

At last he became more calm, clasped his hands upon his breast, fastened his gaze upon the crucifix held aloft by the old man, and thus his soulful spirit passed away.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A FIGHT AND A FALL.

THE first subject that received the consideration of Ben March and his friends, when they arose in the morning, was that of making their way out of the cañon.

"Down the river is the way to git out, Mr. March," suggested Warmack. "Pierre Narbois has told me all about it."

"I suppose so. Sister Fanny has showed us the best way. We must go out as she came in—if we are to get out at all. The only difficulty is, as far as I can now see, that her two



boats will not carry us all, for I presume that Señor Orteza and his daughter wish to accompany us. By the way, Freddy, I see that you have commenced to build a boat, by which I infer that you, too, had resolved to try the river. How did you expect to get over the falls? You could not have gone over them without losing your lives, and you could not have carried the boat below them, without falling into the hands of the Indians."

"That is one of the matters which I left in the hands of Providence."

"I suppose Providence has solved the difficulty in the only way it admitted of being solved, and your boat will be just the thing we need at present."

Ben and Fred March, accordingly, proceeded to complete the craft, assisted by Warmack.

Señor Orteza proved that he had forgiven the misdeeds of his nephew, by saying at his grave the Catholic burial-service, and by the raising of a mound of stones at the head of the grave, in which was inserted a rude wooden cross.

Ben and Fred worked busily at their boat during the day, while Warmack and the Canadian scouted about the cañon.

The New York belle and the Mexican beauty soon became the best of friends, and Ysabel opened her heart to Fanny, telling her the long and sweet story of her love for Fred, and the doleful tale of her horror of Mito. Her American friend sympathized with and comforted her, until Ysabel was filled with such hopeful joy and joyful hope as she had never yet known.

Thus the day passed pleasantly and peacefully at the little stone house. In the evening the hunters came in, bringing an abundance of game, and reported that all was quiet about the Mohave villages, and that no Indians were stirring in the neighborhood.

The next morning the men gayly carried the boats down below the falls, to the foot of the rapids, where they were launched and loaded with the baggage of the several parties and provisions for the voyage.

They then set forth in high spirits. In the first boat were Big John, his two Mohaves and Manuel, with the greater portion of the baggage; in the second came Pierre Xarbois



and Jim Warmack, with Professor Belzoni and Fanny; the third contained Señor Orteza, Ysabel, Fred and Ben. In the same boat was a large deerskin bag, filled with nuggets and dust of gold, which had created quite an excitement when the old man uncovered his hoard and told where and how it had been obtained.

It was not until the middle of the afternoon, when they were approaching a series of rapids, at the head of which it would be necessary to land, that the Canadian, whose boat was then in the lead, pointed at some armed Indians who stood on the shore at the head of the portage, and the boats were brought together for the purpose of consultation.

The Canadian said that he could take his boat down the rapids, and Big John could do the same with another; but he doubted whether Ben or Warmack, neither of whom was accustomed to such navigation, would be as successful.

"I can do it," stoutly exclaimed Ben. "While Freddy is in the boat, there is no danger that I will fail. Lead on, and you will see that I can go wherever you can."

The boats were quickly pulled across the stream, where, under the lofty and frowning cliff, they were headed down the rapids, and the descent began.

The only damage that the voyagers sustained in running the chute was a slight wetting. The Indians witnessed their escape with furious yells and shouts of anger, but seemed determined not to be foiled so easily, for they could be seen running down the cañon, with the intention of gaining another point of vantage.

The boats again moved along easily and swiftly, and the boatmen were in good spirits, for they had a considerable distance to go before reaching the next portage.

Ben March would have been happy if his brother had been such as he was before his descent into the cañon; but Fred had changed greatly. His fall evidently had so impaired his memory as to obliterate all former affections and ties of kindred. To Ben, who loved him so intensely, who had mourned him so bitterly, and had sought for him so eagerly this change was very afflicting, and it preyed upon his spirits until he became buried in a sadness that was unusual with him.



At nightfall, as the little flotilla approached the second landing, a number of Indians rose up from among the rocks, and commenced firing with bows and arrows.

The canoes were headed up-stream, after one of Big John's men had been severely wounded, and were landed above where the Indians were stationed. From this point the men of the party advanced upon the Mohaves, who had received reinforcements and fresh supplies of ammunition, and soon drove them back, until they took up a position in a narrow pass, from which it was impossible to dislodge them before night put a stop to the fighting.

In the morning they found their antagonists waiting for them in the pass, from which it was determined that they must be dislodged at all hazards, as the necessary portage could not be made without carrying the canoes through the pass.

Fred March thought that he had discovered a way by which the pass could be turned, and its defenders attacked in the rear, and he was permitted to try the experiment. Accompanied by Pierre Xarbois and Big John, he scaled the cliffs, while the remainder of the white party attacked the pass in front.

The Indians defended the pass very well against those on the shore, who were unable to drive them from their stronghold; but when they found themselves attacked from an unexpected quarter, and when stones began to rain down on their heads and bullets to strike them in the rear, they were naturally seized with a panic, of which their assailants took advantage, and pressed them so vigorously that they soon commenced to fly.

Ben March, with his victorious party, had reached the middle of the pass, when he heard a savage yell of triumph above his head. Looking up, he saw his brother Fred struggling in the powerful grasp of Mito, who was getting the better of him, and was gradually pressing him toward the edge of the cliff.

With a cry like that of a tigress that has been robbed of her young, Ben rushed up the steep ascent, springing from rock to rock with wonderful speed and agility; but he was too late. He reached the spot just as Fred was forced



backward over the cliff, and fell on the rocks below, and the Indian raised himself to his full height, with a yell of exultation.

It was his last triumph, for, the next instant, he was seized by Fred's half-frantic brother, who lifted him bodily from the rock, and dashed him violently over the precipice.

With trembling steps Ben descended into the pass, where he found the mangled and insensible body of his brother, with Ysabel already kneeling by his side, and mingling her tears with the blood of her lover.

Maddened by the sight, he clubbed his rifle and rushed into the midst of the Indians, felling them on every side. Disheartened by the death of Mito, the terror-stricken savages fled from this avenging demon, and in a few minutes the pass was cleared, and not one of them was left in sight.

Having thus disposed of their enemies, the white men carried their boats to the foot of the rapids, and reloaded them. The body of Fred, in which Señor Orteza and Professor Belzoni declared that life was not yet extinct, was carefully laid in his own boat, tearfully guarded by Ben and Ysabel, and thus the party sadly set sail again.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### CONCLUSION.

ALL day poor Fred lay unconscious in the bottom of the boat. To his first stupor a deep slumber supervened, which Señor Orteza interpreted as a good sign. One of Big John's Mohaves had been transferred to that boat as an oarsman, so that Ben was able to give a great deal of his attention to his brother. His wounds had been carefully dressed by the old Mexican, who pronounced them to be dangerous but not necessarily mortal, and he was tenderly nursed by the embodiments of manly strength and womanly beauty, in the persons of Ben and Ysabel. It was remarkable, Señor Orteza said, that he had a severe wound in his head, similar to that which



he had received when he was found in the cañon, and in the same locality.

During the day Professor Belzoni frequently brought his boat alongside, that Fanny might inquire concerning the condition of the sufferer, and she always received the same answer—that he was breathing, but still unconscious.

As one of the Mohaves had been badly wounded, and the other was assisting Ben March, Jim Warmack had taken his place in Big John's boat, which carried the heaviest load. Thus there were seven able-bodied men left, but they could not help feeling uneasy on account of the Indians; for, if they should then be attacked, with two wounded men on their hands, and two women to look after, they felt that they would not be able to offer an effective resistance.

The Indians, however, were satisfied with the severe castigation that they had received, or were too much disorganized, after the loss of their chief, to make any further hostile efforts. The voyagers were not molested by them, but pursued their way quietly and without difficulty, until an hour or so before night, when they landed at the head of another series of rapids, where they would be obliged to make a portage.

The boats were unloaded and hauled up, with the exception of that in which Fred March was lying, and a fortification of stones and packs was made, as had been done the night before. Then supper was prepared and eaten, and some of the party sought their rest.

Ben and Ysabel were not among those who slept. All through the night they watched by the side of the unconscious man. Not until near daybreak did Ben fall into a doze, with the head of Ysabel pillowed on his arm—for he cherished the beautiful Mexican girl, for the sake of the brother whom he loved so dearly.

He was awakened from his fitful slumber by the light touch of Señor Orteza, who reported a change in the condition of the patient. Ben was instantly kneeling by the sufferer's side. Fred, with open eyes, gazed around with a wondering stare, and then followed a glad smile of recognition, which drew from Ben tears of joy.

"Is this really you, brother Ben?" asked the youth, in a faint and feeble voice. "When I was falling I thought that



you would be at the bottom almost as soon as I would, though it seemed impossible. How did you manage to get down here? You are the dearest, best and bravest fellow in the world. It was not your fault that the rope broke, Ben—it was nobody's fault but mine. I was getting on very well after that fall, until I shot a mountain-sheep. Where is that sheep? It must be somewhere about here. Why don't you speak to me, Ben? Am I very badly hurt? Do you think I will die? Why, it is morning! Have I been lying here all night?"

"It is a long time, my dear boy, since you fell down into the cañon," replied Ben, as soon as his emotion would permit him to speak. "We have been looking for you ever since, and it was only lately that we found you. You have had another fall, and you are badly wounded, but we hope you will recover."

"I don't understand you. Who is this?" continued the youth, as his gaze rested wonderingly on Ysabel.

"It is Ysabel, Freddy—your own Ysabel," replied the weeping girl.

"Ysabel! Who is Ysabel? Ah! I think I remember. You must pardon me, fair lady, and you, too, brother Ben, for I can't get things straightened out in my head. I hope it will all come right after a while."

"God grant that it may!" broke from the lips of his brother and Ysabel.

Fanny and Professor Belzoni were brought to the boat to see Fred and to express their greetings and congratulations; after which he was made to take some nourishment, and was left in quiet, according to the advice of Señor Orteza, who recommended that he should not be excited in any way.

The boats and the packs were then carried down to the foot of the rapids, where the party again embarked, with more cheerful and hopeful feelings. The wounded Mohave was able to walk, and Fred was carried in his boat, which was a very easy though cumbrous sort of a litter.

During the day the young man appeared to improve rapidly, but at night fever set in, and his condition became more critical; but nature was so assisted by the watchful skill of



Señor Orteza, and by the excellent care and nursing that he received, that, by the time they reached the edge of the cañon, he was nearly recovered, except from his wounds.

To the great joy of his friends, he recovered in the full possession of all his faculties of mind, his remembrance of what had happened previous to his descent into the cañon, and of all the circumstances attending his descent, being remarkably clear and distinct.

He also awoke to a lively remembrance of Ysabel, who, when she perceived that he knew her well, and that his love for her was as strong as ever, "rejoiced with exceeding great joy," and was the brightest and happiest spirit in the party.

The remainder of the journey down the river was accomplished without any serious accident. At the mouth of the cañon they found, in fine condition, the horses belonging to Fanny's expedition, in charge of the men who had been left to pasture them. There they went into a camp, to get a supply of meat, and to await the return of Jim Warmack and Manuel, who were sent north to bring down the animals and baggage that Ben March had left in the care of Bernardo. When they arrived, every thing was in readiness for the journey to the coast, and they set forth in good spirits.

A horse-litter was prepared for Fred. This was made by taking two poles about twenty feet in length, uniting them by two sticks three feet long and lashed across them at the distance of six feet apart, and stretching a hide between them to form the bed. Thus two shafts were left at each end of the litter, between which two steady horses were placed and harnessed to them. The bed was covered with blankets, on which Fred rode comfortably and safely, the horses being managed by the Canadian and Manuel.

Thus, in due course of time, they reached Los Angeles, where they were obliged to wait a long time, keeping a messenger at the port of San Diego, to report the arrival of a vessel bound for the lower coast.

Señor Orteza found there many old-time friends, who did their best to entertain him and his companions. The days, therefore, passed pleasantly in the "City of the Angels."

Ysabel was greatly sought after by the young Californians, who were averse to her being carried away from them by a



North American ; but she saw no charms in any of them that could attract her from Fred, whose side she never quitted unless she was obliged to.

The señor did not fail to look after the remnant of his property, which he found to be a pretty large one, his landed estates having been saved by the law from the clutches of his nephew. Leaving his affairs in charge of a trusty man, he changed his gold into a letter of credit, and declared his intention of accompanying his new friends to New York.

Professor Belzoni claimed of Fanny the performance of her promise, and they were married, according to the Catholic ceremony, before they left Los Angeles.

Fred March, although his wounds were not yet entirely healed, insisted upon being united to Ysabel at the same time, and they two were also made one.

The long-expected vessel at last arrived, and proved to be a good and comfortable ship, bound around the cape for Boston. The newly-married couples and their friends gladly embarked, and in due course of time arrived safely in New York.

When Jim Warmack and Pierre Xarbois were paid off, they took leave of their employers and friends, with many protestations of regard and good-will, and went direct to Monterey, where they soon spent their gold and silver in a wild debauch, and invested it in monté banks and horse-races. When it was all gone, they returned to the mountains, to resume their life of hardship and adventure.

Mrs. March was both pleased and surprised when Ben and Fanny returned, bringing with them their recovered brother. She took a great fancy to Fred's beautiful little Mexican wife, who created quite a sensation in her circle of fashionables ; but she found it hard to forgive Fanny for marrying Professor Belzoni.

She listened to the story of the adventures of her step-children in the great cañon, with a sort of frowning interest, as if she considered it all very wild and improper, and as if she listened under protest. She pronounced it "True, of course, but very improbable, and the less said about it the better."

Ben March, satisfied with life in the wilderness, settled down



as a merchant in New York, and became, what he could not help being, a useful and respected citizen.

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"Why is it, Paul, that you never say any thing about the great cañon, in your lectures?" asked Fanny, one evening, when she was sitting with her husband in his study. "I should think you would write a book about it; it would be so wonderful and interesting."

"Entirely too wonderful, my dear child," replied the Professor. "People would not believe me, although they might pretend to. I have already got myself into disrepute by some very mild statements that I have made about it to a few, and hereafter I mean to keep silent on the subject of the great cañon."



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### DIME DIALOGUES No. 27.

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| <p>Pater O'Dowd's campaign. For three males and one female.<br/>         Hasty inferences not always just. Numerous boys.<br/>         Discontented Annie. For several girls.<br/>         A double surprise. Four males and one female.<br/>         What was it? For five ladies.<br/>         What will cure them? For a lady and two boys.<br/>         Independent. For numerous characters.<br/>         Each season the best. For four boys.<br/>         Fried and found wanting. For several males.<br/>         A boy's plot. For several characters.</p> | <p>The street girl's good angel. For two ladies and two little girls.<br/>         "That ungrateful little nigger." For two males.<br/>         If I had the money. For three little girls.<br/>         Appearances are deceitful. For several ladies and one gentleman.<br/>         Love's protest. For two little girls.<br/>         An enforced cure. For several characters.<br/>         Those who preach and those who perform. For three males.<br/>         A gentle conquest. For two young girls.</p> |
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
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| <p>A test that told. For six young ladies and two gentlemen.<br/>         Organizing a debating society. For four boys.<br/>         The awakening. For four little girls.<br/>         The rebuke proper. For 3 gentlemen, 3 ladies.<br/>         Exorcising an evil spirit. For six ladies.<br/>         Both sides of the fence. For four males.<br/>         The spirits of the wood. For two troupes of girls.</p> | <p>No room for the drone. For three little boys.<br/>         Arm-chair. For numerous characters.<br/>         Measure for measure. For four girls.<br/>         Saved by a dream. For two males and two females.<br/>         An infallible sign. For four boys.<br/>         A good use for money. For six little girls.<br/>         An agreeable profession. For several characters.</p> |
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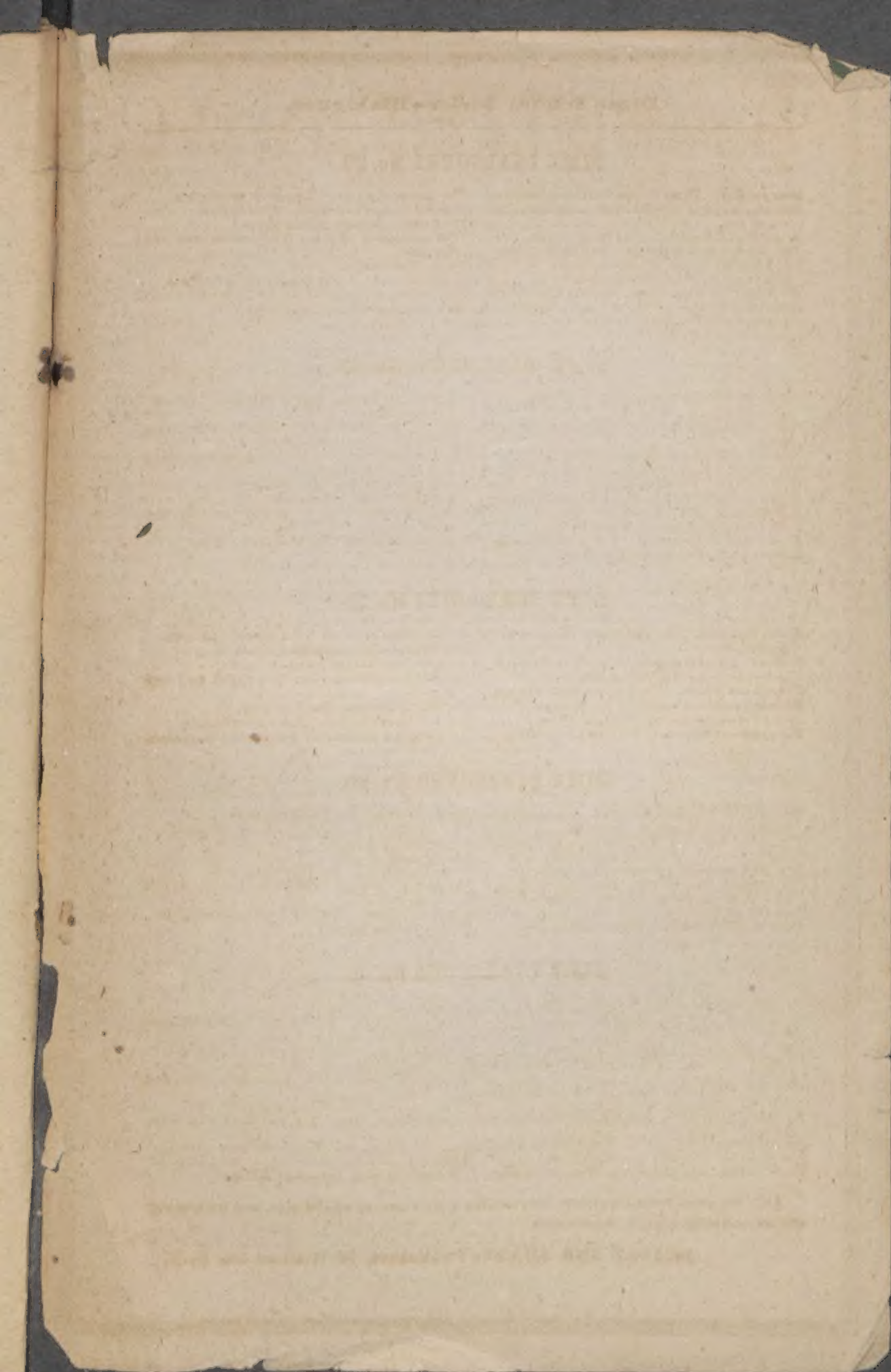
### DIME DIALOGUES No. 30.

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